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The New Age Movement:

Genesis of a High Volume, Low Impact Identity

Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

Die Dissertation *The New Age Movement: A High Volume, Low Impact Identity* untersucht Erfolg und Mißerfolg der New-Age-Bewegung.

Fragestellung

Die New-Age-Bewegung verfügt in Amerika wie in Europa über eine erstaunlich große Gefolgschaft, die zahlenmäßig politisch und gesellschaftlich weitaus einflußreichere Bewegungen wie Friedens- oder Ökologiebewegung bei weitem übertrifft. Dennoch scheint New Age zwar zum Teil gravierende Änderungen in den Lebensgewohnheiten seiner Anhänger/-innen hervorzurufen, aber kaum Einfluß auf gesamtgesellschaftliche Prozesse zu nehmen. Diese Folgenlosigkeit ist nicht zuletzt auf das Fehlen öffentlichkeitswirksamer kollektiver Aktionen der Bewegungsmitglieder zurückzuführen. Stattdessen konzentrieren sich New Ager auf zwar ähnlich gerichtete aber relativ unkoordinierte Veränderungen ihres individuellen Lebensstiles. New Age ist also eine Massenbewegung mit geringem Potenzial für kollektives Handeln. In dieser Studie wird versucht zu erklären, warum New Age über Jahre hinweg erfolgreich kollektives Verhalten hervorgerufen hat, ohne dabei nennenswertes kollektives Handeln produziert zu haben.

Untersuchungsergebnisse

New Age verfügt über eine amorphe Identität, deren Identitätsgrenzen von Individuen leicht überschritten werden können. Eine solche Identität eignet sich zwar zur Bindung vieler Individuen, da die Uneindeutigkeit der Identität Konflikte mit individuell unterschiedlichen ideologischen Positionen unwahrscheinlich macht, ist aber einer starken emotionalen Bindung zu der durch die Identität repräsentierte Bewegung abträglich. Eine solche Solidarität und somit kollektives Handeln induzierende emotionale Bindung würde dagegen durch eine "Vernatürlichung" oder zumindest "Traditionalisierung" der Bewegungsmitgliedschaft, wie sie zum Beispiel durch scheinbar eindeutige Askription der Bewegungsmitgliedschaft erfolgen könnte, gefördert. Eine Hinwendung zu einer solchen stärker ausgrenzenden Kollektividentität wird durch die Organisation von New Age als Industrie mit einem extrem niedrigen Konzentrationsgrad stark behindert. Grund für die Dominanz kleiner Familienbetriebe in der New-Age-Bewegungsindustrie ist wiederum die soziale Herkunft der Mitglieder, welche zumeist aus Strata, die über geringe kulturelle Ressourcen verfügen und untereinander nur schwach vernetzt sind, entstammen. Die

Begrenzung der kulturellen Ressourcen limitiert dabei das Wachstum der Einzelorganisationen, während der geringe Vernetzungsgrad erst die Gründung formaler Organisationen, die über Gewinne finanziert werden müssen, erforderlich macht.

1 New Age: A High Volume, Low Impact Identity

Considering its size — estimates range from 20,000[1] up to 40,000,000[2] US-American adherents — New Age has garnered surprisingly little sociological research. In October 1998, *Sociological Abstracts* counted 81 articles on New Age.[3] In contrast, there were 123 references to a small faction of the women's movement, namely lesbian feminism, and even the tiny *Ku Klux Klan* with its about 5,000 adherents (Feldman 1990: 244) earned almost as many references as did New Age. Sociological monographs that focus on New Age are equally scarce. In English, one anthology (Lewis & Melton 1992) and three monographs (Bloch 1998; Heelas 1996; York 1995) that approach New Age from a sociological angle exist.[4]

Sociologists are not the only persons uninterested in New Age; cultural and political elites in general pay little attention to the movement. In fact, even most New Agers are surprisingly indifferent to New Age as a whole. They are quick to denounce their movement and more than willingly drop the New Age label, as participation in New Age movement has been relabeled an "adoption of a wholistic lifestyle" or an "attraction to occult and esoteric practices."

Despite these obstacles, there does exist a huge market for New Age goods and services. According to one estimate, US-Americans spend roughly 4 billion 1990 US-dollars per year alone on New Age seminars (Rupert 1992: 128). Almost all bookstores carry a large New

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[1] The low-end figure is taken from the 1990 *National Survey of Religious Identification* (Kosmin & Lachman 1993: table 1-2, p. 17). The authors themselves observe:

> "Since [New Age] is not a religious group as such, the small numbers who reported [New Age] as religion are not surprising. Probably only the most committed are included here. Many who have had a spiritual experience beyond the confines of traditional definitions of religion in the groups in which they were raised would, if asked directly, admit to New Age beliefs." (*ibid.*, p.300).

Indeed, this study will reveal that most New Agers maintain only feeble ties to the movement. What is more, Unitarian Universalism, a denomination that has been pervaded with New Age ideology (Lee 1995) alone has a following of 502,000 according to the same survey. It is, thus, safe to assume that the actual number of adherents is at least a six-digit, more likely, though, a 7-digit number.

[2] This figures is based on the percentage of the US population, which shares some New Age beliefs (ReligiousTolerance.org (ed.): "New Age Spirituality," <http://www.religioustolerance.org/newage.htm>, April 20, 1999; survey figures stem from Barnia 1993).

[3] In 1999, the Belgian sociology of religion journal *Social Compass* dedicated an entire issue to New Age, which somewhat allieviated the draught in publications.

[4] Two German language treatises exist (Stenger 1993; Bochinger 1994) and Hanegraaff's (1996) history of the New Age movement does also consider some sociological aspects. Most other self-professed "social scientific" literature can be attributed to the anti-cult movement.

Age section, as do most music stores. There are many specialized New Age stores, and a host of New Age professionals offering service ranging from palm reading to past life regressions. New Age is a cross-national phenomenon. You can buy translations of James Redfield's New Age bestseller *The Celestine Prophecy* at Eau Claire, Wisconsin's *Waldenbooks*, at *Kaufhaus des Westens* in the heart of Berlin, Germany, or at the check-out of the local *esselunga* supermarket in Florence, Italy.[5]

Why is there such a huge discrepancy between the popularity of New Age ideas and the lack of vigor to implement these ideas through collective action? Why do so many people agree with New Age, but do not actively support the movement? More generally, why have new social movements been so much more successful in triggering collective action than new religious movements? These are some of the questions addressed in this thesis, whose main objective is the assessment and development of contemporary movement theory with the help of a usually neglected empirical case, namely New Age. Of course, New Age will also be analyzed in its own right, but the focus will be on theoretical rather than empirical issues.

One might, of course, consider the neglect of social movement research for New Age deserved, since the latter lacks two characteristics many scholars consider defining for social movements. Namely, New Age neither aims for political change nor triggers much collective action. While this diagnosis is certainly empirically warranted, I do think that an examination of New Age in the framework of social movement theory enriches the latter. For one, movement theory seems to suffer from a political bias, which could be alleviated through studies on more culturally oriented movements.[6] Secondly, the focus on movements that successfully engage in collective action replicates a familiar shortcoming of much empirical research, that is sampling on the dependent variable. Only if movement research will also examine less successful movements, it will be possible to identify necessary conditions for collective action. A study of New Age is thus well suited to improve movement theory.

The theoretical framework employed is this study largely follows the currently fashionable fusion of elements of the *strategy* and *identity* (Cohen 1985) paradigms. Additionally, some elements of mass society theory (Kornhauser [1959] 1960) have been incorporated. In a nutshell, the main argument of thesis purports that the social structure of movements'

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[5]   All observations were made in 1997.

[6]   In addition, the women's movement has demonstrated, that cultural phenomena might at some point be transferred to the political arena.

recruitment pools determines the availability of organizational resources for the movements in question, which in turn influence identity construction processes. The outcome of these construction processes then shape the socio-political impact of the movement.

The adoption of strategy and identity paradigms as guiding frameworks for the present study required the development of redress for two weaknesses both paradigms share, namely the neglect of societal structures and a bias towards rationalism.

Both approaches suffer from an under-theorization of the social structures within which movements emerge. Although resource mobilization and political process models are preoccupied with the centrality of resources and networks, they largely ignore the distribution of resources within larger society. Likewise, despite the abundance of contemporary network studies, little attention is paid to the network structure of society as a whole. Instead, network approaches almost exclusively focus on networks endemic to movements. The neglect of the societal structure is not reserved to strategy theories, though. While identity theories do pay attention to social structural elements, these theories are obsessed with those elements that are *visible* in civil society discourses. Identity studies have focused on their "holy trinity" (Cerulo 1997: 386) of gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity, and economic class, but have rarely systematically explored other structural elements of modern society. Concomitantly, purely sociological concepts such as *social connectivity* or *habitus* have been neglected or even jettisoned in favor of concepts such as *gender* and *ethnicity*, which have an appeal to audiences beyond the discipline boundaries of sociology, but often render sociological theories ambiguous. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the impact of so-called[7] *identity movements* on sociological theory was certainly helpful, as it alleviated the neglect of culture in movement theories and established *collective identity* as central concept in both movement theory and social theory in general. Today, however, the preoccupation with identity movements is hampering theoretical development, since all too often the social structure as it is framed in identity fields is conflated with theoretical concepts social structure in sociological theory. Although these two phenomena are, of course, interrelated, they certainly do not constitute an isomorphism or even a monomorphism. At least since Marx we know that not all classes-in-themselves become immediately classes-for-themselves. Marx' concept

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[7]   The establishment of a collective identity is a central problem for a l l movements, particularly inn their incipient phases. Therefore it is misleading to speak of identity movements, when referring to women's, queer, ecology and other movements commonly subsumed under this label.

of false consciousness also taught us that, vice versa, classes-for-themselves that are not classes-in-themselves are equally conceivable. Leaving the identification of the social structure to social movements ignores these problems. Moreover, the uncritical importation of real-world categories into sociological theory is, of course, deeply conservative, since sociological theories that are constructed with societal categories lose their applicability, once the social phenomena that are depicted by these categories undergo changes (Adorno [1957] 1989: 95; Habermas [1963] 1989: 183f; Habermas [1964] 1989: 244, 263).

The second weakness common to strategy and identity theories also likely stems from the blurring of the boundaries between movement research and movement practice. This weakness is a singular focus on collective action as a more or less rational cooperation of individuals. The experience of the 1960s' and 1970s' new movements led scholars to invert the irrationality bias of m a n y collective behavior theories. Now it seems as if crazes, riots, fads and panics would be antithetical to movements.[8] The favorite empirical cases of contemporary movement theory, the new social movements, indeed do often recur to rational action. If movement theory had paid more attention to new religious movements and populist ethno-nationalist movements, which are also quite common in contemporary society, a different picture would have arisen, as these movements recur far more often to collective behavior.

My analysis of New Age then aims at alleviation of problems of the dominant movement theories through an examination of a neglected empirical phenomenon. Fortunately, I did not have to develop the conjectures that might remedy above described weaknesses from scratch. Instead, I found, that many hypotheses from the mass society paradigm (Arendt 1951: chapter 11; Kornhauser [1959] 1960; Lederer [1940] 1967), which movement theorists today usually reject in passing, contains not only an elaborate theory on the above weaknesses, but also fits the empirical case of New Age reasonably well. Indeed, if one ignores mass society's theses on the political sphere, it at times reads like an introduction into the ideological and structural

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[8] Of course, the dynamics of irrational behavior can also (rationally) be appropriated by the state. Take the following example from Nazi-Germany:

> "The intermingling of collective behavior and officially organized action, of cloaking the machine-organized terrorism by alleging that irresponsible mob activities, motivated by "righteous indignation," is the cause - is revealed in Göbbel's contradictory formula: 'the organized spontaneity of the people.'" (Gerth & Mills 1954: 434).

aspects of New Age. Take Hannah Arendt's deft characterization of the recruitment pool for totalitarian movements:

> "[T]hey recruited their members from the mass of apparently indifferent people whom all other parties had given up as too apathetic or too stupid for their attention." (Arendt 1951: 305)[9]

Granted that this assessment gives only an incomplete picture Nazi's recruitment pool, it fairly well characterizes New Age's clientele. New Agers usually do lack substantial network ties, they do not share a common goal, they command over little cultural capital (they are "too stupid"), and they do not engage in collective action in the strict sense (they are "apathetic"). Of course, that does not mean that New Age feeds automatically into fascist ideologies (Hexham 1999), as some antagonists suggest (e.g., Ditfurth 1996; Bellmund & Siniveer 1997).[10] In fact, one of the most salient features of fascism is its exclusionary xenophobia, while New Age is decidedly universalistic.[11] However, the structural elements identified in mass society theory apply to New Age and might thus usefully amend political process and identity theories.

The thesis is structured as follows. In Chapter 2 the existing theoretical approaches to social and religious movements are discussed. The theoretical model for the development of New Age that has been elaborated within this framework is presented in chapter 3. The data that shall support this model will be presented in chapter 4. Chapters five through eight then will match these data with theoretical model. Chapter 5 is mainly descriptive and will introduce the reader into literary, ideological and social aspects of New Age. Chapter 6 will discuss discourses in New Age's identity field. Chapter 7 will rely more on resource mobilization theory and tie New Age identity to its organizational form. Finally, chapter 8 will discuss recruitment processes to New Age and thereby analyze the structural position of the movement. To round up the discussion, the major findings will be reiterated in the

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[9] Masses in this respect are disconnected persons, which lack a "common interest" (*ibid.*).

[10] Lederer ([1940] 1967: 217ff) rightfully acknowledges that astrology, which today has been partly incorporated in New Age, does n o t follow the logic of crowd processes prominent in the development of German nazism and Italian fascism, where according to mass society theory individuals in amorphous crowds act, or more precisely behave, without considerable reflection on the direction of their action. Instead, astrology is based on reflective action, even if the thinking in astrology differs sharply from the rationalism of modern science.

[11] To be sure, German nazism just like New Age does contain elements of pagan mythologies, but so do those branches of the women's movement, which incorporate Goddess mythologies.

conclusion and implications of the findings for two theoretical fields, citizenship and social movement theory, will be discussed.

A First Glimpse at New Age

Let me briefly summarize practices and beliefs of New Agers. This is a complicated endeavor because New Age is a very incoherent phenomenon which would escape any precise definitional attempts. Matters are aggravated by the fact that many movement participants have distanced themselves from the New Age label but continue to carry out the practices commonly subsumed under the New Age (Lewis & Melton 1992: x; Hexham 1999). In addition, external and internal conceptions of New Age differ markedly. With these problems in mind we can identify New Age as encompassing

- the belief in an evolutionary cultural transformation of society;
- a preference for eclecticism;
- an emphasis on individualism;
- the adaptation of Eastern religious beliefs such as religious monism;
- an emphasis on spirituality and mysticism;
- attempts to achieve harmony with nature;
- a belief in supernatural phenomena and extraterrestrial life;
- a reliance on alternative health practices.

Channeling, astrology, numerology, meditation, neo-paganism, devotion to angels, aromatherapy, faith healing, herbal medicine, acupuncture, massage therapies, dietary regimes, hypnosis, anthroposophy/theosophy, Sufism are examples for New Age beliefs and practices. These examples neither jointly define New Age, nor does the exercise of any of these practices suffice to characterize a person or organization as New Age. But on the whole most New Agers do embrace several of these practices and beliefs. Some readers might object that these circumscription of New Age is very ambiguous. They are right. The reason for this ambiguity is that New Age constitutes an empirical event, not a sociological concept.

The Societal Context

The context for New Age is modern society. which entails some important properties for present purposes. First, modern society is a highly differentiated system, which has imperiled

the capacity of individuals to develop parsimonious individual identities.[12] Second, modern society requires effective selection mechanisms for the reduction of its complexity. Social movements allegedly constitute one of these mechanisms. Third, modernity is also an ideological framework that sets the playing field for all other ideologies including those of social movements. The most notable elements of this ideological framework are at the core of the ideology of modern states: republicanism, nationalism, and rationalism.

Contemporary Western Europe and North America are the core spatial and temporal locations of modern society. The New Age movement, or, for that matter most new religious movements, originated in the US, more specifically in California (Barker 1989: 10; Hess 1993: 45; Lucas 1995: 15; Snow [1976] 1993; York 1995: 2). Since this thesis looks at the emergence of New Age, the selection of the United States as political backdrop has been straightforward. The decision to select Germany as second fieldwork terrain has been guided by both practical and theoretical considerations. From a theoretical vantage point, it was important to select a polity, whose approach to new religious movements differs markedly from the *laissez faire* policy prevalent in the US. Particularly the predominantly francophone and German-speaking states of Western Europe are fairly repressive towards new religious movements. Given my language proficiency, it was then a small step to opt for Germany as a contrasting case. This decision was additionally facilitated by the fact that New Age is highly visible in Germany.[13]

Before elaborating my thesis, let me make a brief note on linguistic style. I tried to follow throughout the thesis the following advice:

> "Bullshit qualifications, making your statements fuzzy, ignore the philosophical and methodological tradition which holds that making generalizations in a strong universal form identifies negative evidence which can be used to improve them." (Becker 1986: 10)

Of course, that means that the unanimity, with which some conjectures are put forth in this thesis are not backed equally unanimous empirical data. In particular, the evidence on New

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[12] See section 0.

[13] According to Schneider (1991: 31) 60% of the German population is familiar with the term New Age. There also has been a series of articles on New Age in one popular German newsmagazine, *Focus* (No. 14-16/1996; in the case of No. 14 this series is the titlestory). More than 10% of the total German booksales fall into the New Age category (Stenger 1989: 119).

Age's class base remains circumstantial, not the least because there is little prior empirical research on New Age, on which I could have relied.

2 THEORY: THE LITERATURE

This chapter situates the present study in the existing literature. It starts with an clarification of core theoretical concepts, i.e., collective action and social movements. Although New Age can be analyzed with movement theory, until now sociological research on New Age has primarily drawn on the sociology of religion, whose approaches to new religious movements are discussed in section 0. As new religious movement theories contain a number of deficits that have been largely overcome in social movement theories, it is suggested to amend sociology of religion analyses of New Age with social movement theory. The contemporary paradigms in social movement research will be reviewed in section 0.

The Concept of a Social Movement

Three characteristics jointly define social movements.

(1) *Full-fledged* social movements trigger *collective action* in an effort to produce to *collective goods*.

(2) The framework of this collective action is a multiplicity of formal and informal organizations outside the polity.

(3) The unity of a movement is achieved through symbolic rather than organizational means.

The following sub-sections will elaborate on these characteristics.

Types of Collective Action

Collective action indicates the joint efforts of a group of persons towards a common goal. It constitutes a sub-variety of social action. *Action* implies intentionality and thereby is distinguished from mere *behavior*, which is not necessarily goal-oriented (Bader 1991: 67). Collective action, despite being i n p r a c t i c e individual action (Luhmann [1984] 1988: 273), is a form of social action and hence "it can be oriented at past, present or expected behavior of others" (Weber [1921] 1978: 11).[14]

Most contemporary movement research is concerned with movements that primarily engage in what I term *collective action proper*. This form of collective action requires r a t i o n a l and somewhat c o o r d i n a t e d efforts by individuals towards a common goal, i.e., it seeks to produce *collective goods* (Olson 1965: 7). Collective goods in this sense are goods or services that acquire their value only once they are accessible to a

sizable part of the group in question.[15] Collective action proper thus presupposes some conscious attempts to coordinate the individual actions of group members.

Many authors contend that collective action entails a minimum of solidarity (Bader 1991: 114f; Melucci 1980: 202; Melucci 1985: 795; Melucci 1989: 27). However, Olson's (1965: 51) finding that most collective action by large groups is triggered through so-called *selective incentives* and consequently does not require any solidarity is still standing (Kim & Bearman 1997: 72). An incorporation of solidarity into the definition of collective action would therefore exclude many actions within social movements. Additionally, such proceeding would disable the opportunity to examine to what extent solidarity and/or selective incentives trigger collective action. Consequently, the definition employed here does not consider solidarity an integral part of collective action.

Group Rationality (Interaction Effects)		Individual Rationality	
		+	-
	+	collective action proper	collective behavior
	-	mass behavior	

Table 2-1 Types of Collective Action

Contemporary movement theory expects high amounts of collective action proper from social movements. Of course, movement theory did not always contain this utilitarian bias. To the contrary, from Le Bon to the collective behavior school, social movements were in the past considered extensions of fundamentally irrational behavior, such as crowds, riots, or, fads.[16] Only the experience of the 1960s gradually led to a reorientation of social movement theory towards rational choice models. However, although the 1960s countercultural movements did focus on rational action, almost all movements also contain sizable amounts of *collective behavior* (Oliver 1989). Collective behavior is not consciously oriented at a common goal, but it does originate in group dynamics. It is also distinguished from collective action proper by a lack of individual rationality.

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[14] Cf. also Bader (1991: 67).

[15] Note, that Olson's "public goods," that possess the quality of non-excludability, are only a relatively rare subvariety of collective goods (Hardin 1982: 18f).

[16] For instance, the most influential piece of the collective behavior tradition, Smelser's (1962) *Theory of Collective Behavior*, puts social movements into a one row with panics, crazes, and hostile outbursts.

Unlike collective behavior, *mass behavior*, as it is defined here, does not principally exclude rationality on the individual level.[17] Instead, it denotes aggregate individual action and/or behavior that has the same direction, but does not contain any direct interaction (or "inter-behavior") between members of the group in question (Kornhauser [1959] 1960: 44f; Gerth & Mills 1954: 432ff). It is therefore distinguished from collective action proper and collective behavior through a lack of "group rationality." Table 2-1 visualizes the typology of collective action.

Social movement theories of late 1940s and early 1950s focused on mass behavior. Afterwards, collective behavior stood at the center of attention, until from the mid-seventies on, collective action proper has been at the core of social movement research. Apparently, the most prominent movements of the times have left their mark on social movement theory. Under the impression of Europe's fascist movements, mass behavior and collective behavior theories flourished, because the alleged irrationality of fascism bears a strong intuitive appeal. Likewise, the — according to most theorists more palatable (Lipset 1994) — new social movements facilitated the move towards incorporation of rationality into social movement theories. A too close orientation of sociological categories at the empirical reality comes with a price tag, though. Most social movements do encompass all three types of collective action, albeit to different extents. Theories that focus solely on any of the three types are unable to analyze the different problems and opportunities that are associated with specific configurations of collective action. Therefore, in this thesis the question to what extent a social movement engages in any of the three types will be left for empirical investigation.

Social Movements

Conceptualizations of social movements frequently originate in empirical generalizations rather than theoretical analysis (Luhmann [1984] 1988: 543, fn. 80; Melucci 1984: 823f). Concomitantly, different movement theories do not always apply to same empirical phenomena. Nevertheless, most movement definitions do share some commonalties (Diani 1992b: 2; Raschke 1985: 76).

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[17] To be sure, Kornhauser's ([1959] 1960) original definition of mass behavior does contain a strong bias towards irrationality and therefore behavior. However, this categorization has been shown to be of little help even for the mass movements Kornhauser explicitly wants to explain, that is fascist movements (for a recent critique see Brustein & Falter 1995).

For starters, social movement participants share at least some minimal collective identity (Diani 1992b: 8).[18] A number of collective identity conceptualizations, which will analyzed in the following chapter, exists. At this point, it shall suffice to define the collective identity of a social movement as the perception of the movement as an entity by both its constituents and individuals outside the movement. Since such representations develop over a considerable amount of time, the movement concept also implies some temporal continuity (Bader 1991: 69; Raschke 1987: 21; Turner & Killian 1957: 223). This continuity distinguishes a social movement from collective episodes (Marx & McAdam 1994: 72; Diani 1992b: 16; Raschke 1987: 26f).

Many authors consider social conflict or protest a central element of a social movement (Diani 1992b: 9-12). This protest is at least partially directed at social change, which the movement tries to achieve, prohibit or reverse (Bader 1991: 70; Melucci 1980: 202; Melucci 1985: 795; Neidhardt & Rucht 1991: 450; Raschke 1987: 21; Touraine 1985: 760; Wasmuth 1987: 111). The protest occurs outside the formal polity, which distinguishes social movements from pressure groups (Bader 1991: 69; Diani 1992b: 11f; Melucci 1989: 28). However, it is sometimes empirically difficult to decide, whether a movement contributes to social change (Halfmann & Japp 1993: 429).[19] Parts of movement might advocate change, while others may prefer a more idiosyncratic proceeding. Even if the latter view prevails, outsiders might nevertheless perceive the movement as a threat to the status quo.[20] Some collectivities — New Age is a prime example — hope or expect social change, but are

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[18] The category of collective identity I will use originates from Melucci (1980: 200). Already Blumer (1951: 67) considered the "*esprit du corps*" a central element of a movement. McCarthy & Zald (1977: 20) point to a common "set of opinions and beliefs;" Raschke (1987: 21) speaks of a "high symbolic integration;" Tilly (1978: 63) refers to "catness;" Zwick (1990: 23) adopts the concept of "collective consciousness." Although Elster (1989: 168) "remain[s] skeptical about the explanatory value of the concept of collective identity," he introduces at another place (Elster 1985: 345ff) the Marxian concept of "class for itself," which in essence serves the same function as a collective identity.

[19] Halfmann & Japp however hold a very different opinion on the question, why it is difficult to tackle the question after the movement goals.

[20] Although New Religious Movements are overwhelmingly not "anti-statist" (Beckford 1981: 260), in Germany the state nevertheless constitutes their most important antagonist (*ibid*., 253f). That it is difficult to assess the social change potential of a collective phenomenon is apparent in the case of the New Religious Movements in general and New Age in particular: Hess (1993: x) and Schneider (1991: 93) contest that these phenomena meet the change criterion, while Champion (1993: 211), Van Driel & Richardson (1988: 37), Von Padberg (1987: 53), Zald & McCarthy (1987 [1982]: 69) do consider them agents of social change; Gusfield (1994: 63f) somewhat ambivalently asserts that New Age does not engage in protest actions, but nevertheless offers an alternative worldview.

unwilling or unable to trigger this change through their actions. In the face of these difficulties, I advocate a lenient interpretation of the protest criterion.

Social movements exist primarily on the level of informal networks (Donati 1984: 843). Although these networks entail an elective affinity to decentralized informal organizations, movements also incorporate a minimum of formal organization (Bader 1991: 69). However, *social movement organizations* are only mobilization vehicles and as such represent only one distinct movement element, which must not be elevated into the entire movement (Bader 1991: 218; McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987:20f).

On the level of the object world, the conceptualization of a movement "as a mobilizing collective actor, who on the basis of high symbolic integration and low role specification attempts to produce collective goods"[21] thus seems reasonable. On the societal level, this actor corresponds to a "cognitive territory" (Eyerman & Jamison 1991a: 55). This definition is widely compatible with McCarthy and Zald's (1987: 21) conceptualization of a "social movement" and overlaps with Melucci's (1984: 828) notion of a "social movement area."

New Movements?

Several types of social movements have been suggested, among them *new social movements* and *new religious movements*. The 1960s increase in movement activity by population strata that for a long time had been acquiescent led students of social movements to the assumption that a novel type of movement had arrived in advanced industrial society. Based on the experience of the "new left movements," some movement scholars even attempted to formulate a specific approach that was s o l e l y concerned with the explanation of the so-called new social movements. Analogously, the advent of a wide variety of new religious cults, which are presumably located outside the dominant Judeo-Christian traditions, guided sociologists of religion to develop the concept of new religious movements concept. However, in both cases the novelty assumption turned out to be a chimera leading into a theoretical dead end. Nevertheless, both conceptualization are still popular in movement research.

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[21] This definition differs from Raschke (1987: 21) only in so far, as it substitutes the substantive goals of social movements. According to Raschke's definition, social movements are directed towards social change, a term that is laden with a bias towards political movements. How uneasy Raschke himself has become, shows that Raschke's (1985: 77) earlier definition required even b a s i c [*grundlegenden*] social change.

Probably the sole commonality the so-called *new social movements* share is their compliance with the criteria that define social movements. Peace, women's, gay liberation, civil rights, and ecology movements are considered the core new social movements (Offe 1985: 828; Kriesi 1988a: 42; Watts 1987: 50). A vague notion of new social movements exists in public discourse (Kriesi 1988b: 351),[22] but it is difficult to establish any analytical definition.

Despite, but sometimes also because of the "heterogeneity" of both constituency and goals of this movement sector and even its constituting movements,[23] the new social movement category has been appropriated by much of sociological theory. Its analytical status remains disputed, though. Some students of new social movements consider their research object to be a descriptive category, other suggest it would be analytical concept, still others consider the new social movements category a temporary solution displaying a weakness in sociological theory.[24] The various definition criteria reflect this situation.

Frequently the constituency is said to distinguish new social movements from their older counterparts, in particular since the recruitment pool of the new movements is not aligned with Marxian class cleavages (Brand 1985a: 9; Brand 1990: 26; Dalton, Kuechler & Bürklin 1990: 11; Klandermans 1991: 26; Tarrow 1989: 58; Zwick 1990: 43). However, the membership of ethno-nationalist movements also seldom coincides with classes.[25] Hence, the defiance of class structures cannot be considered constitutive for new social movements. In any case, social movements must be defined independently of class, if we want to analyze the impact of social structure on movements (Eder 1995a: 23).

Similar problems arise, if the "unconventional" action repertoire is cited as a distinctive trait of the new movements (Brand 1987: 34; Raschke 1985: 412), since both the so-called New Right (Rucht 1990: 160) and the labor movement (Calhoun 1991; Klandermans & Tarrow 1988: 26f) have recurred at times to the same action forms.

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[22] The high response rates to the new social movement questions in the *eurobarometer* surveys supports this assertion.

[23] Kriesi (1988a: 46-48), for example, finds four currents alone in the Dutch peace movement.

[24] Depending on the corresponding theoretical assumptions, resource mobilization theory defines new social movements, in the American context read often: contemporary movements, mostly operationally, new social movement theorists by definition treat them as an analytical concept, while Gamson (1992a: 58) and Melucci (1989: 42) consider the term a weakness in sociological theory. Wilson (1990: 203) analogously calls for an analytical redefinition of the New Religious Movements.

[25] Hechter (1975) and Nairn (1977) apparently hold a different opinion.

If the goals of the new movements would lie solely on a "symbolic" or "cultural" plane outside the political realm (Melucci 1980: 220; Melucci 1985: 787; Sassoon 1984: 871; Seidman 1993: 108), then this would indeed distinguish them from other movements.[26] However, this claim is highly disputable.[27]

The probably least contested definition of new social movements suggests that new social movements encompass all movements customarily associated with "postmaterialist" (Inglehart 1990)[28] values (Brand 1985a: 11; Brand 1985b: 307ff; Pichardo 1997: 412; Tarrow 1989: 58; Zwick 1990: 83).[29] Unfortunately, we will see that this definition is also the least analytically valuable one. In conclusion, one might very well suspect "that the elevation of a collection of singular phenomena to a movement type is less an adequate reflection of empirical 'reality,' but a product of the social sciences" (Görg 1992: 12), which is nevertheless almost devoid of sociological meaning.

Due to these criticisms, the heyday of the new social movement concept has passed (Pichardo 1997). In the 1990s, women's movement and queer movement (succeeding gay liberationism) together with ethnic minority movements (which partially replaced the civil rights movement) have become dubbed *identity movements*. Yet, the term identity movements is equally dissatisfactory. While it is true that the so-called identity movements are very explicit in their identity construction efforts and have been highly successful in utilizing their identities as a symbolic resource, any emergent movement struggles over its identity. Furthermore, in terms of constituency and ideology, identity movements seem to encompass an even more heterogeneous field movements than the new social movements. Compare, for instance, the ethno-regionalist Italian *Lega Nord* with a mainstream women's movement organization such as NOW. Both are identity movement organizations, but while the Northern Leagues recruit mainly from the "old" petty bourgeoisie (Diani 1996: 1058; Messina 1998: 476; Schmidtke & Ruzza 1993: 19f), NOW is overproportionally staffed with persons originating in the new middle classes. With respect to their ideology, the women's

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[26] Even then, the youth movement at the dawn of the 20th century would also have to be considered a new social movement (Raschke 1985: 48; Zwick 1990: 39).

[27] Cf., e.g., Offe's (1985: 859ff) compelling discussion of possible alliances of the new social movements with "old" political actors of both left and right. Cf. Zwick (1990: 48f) regarding the power struggles of the new movements.

[28] Inglehart (1990: chapter 11) himself, however, considers postmaterialist values as source, rather than aspect of the new social movements.

movement is part of the so-called New Left, while Northern Leagues are more to the right of the ideological spectrum, however ambivalent notions of "right" and "left" might be. In contrast, the environmentalist movement is far less concerned with identity issues than either feminism and ethno-regionalism, but its recruitment pool largely overlaps with that of the women's movement (Bearman & Everett 1993). Neither new social movements nor identity movements are thus completely satisfactory concepts. Since several of my theses contain the social structure of a movement's recruitment pool as operative variable, I will nevertheless recur in the illustration of my theses to the term new social movements. It will then be used as a proxy for new middle class movements. Let me, though, again emphasize, that I neither think that any of the constituent movements of the new social movement industry can be considered monolithic collective actors. That implies that the entire industry is even more heterogeneous. What is more, since much of the thesis is concerned with identity issues and environmentalist and peace movements that have received far less attention in identity theory than movements based on gender and sexual orientation (Cerulo 1997: 386), I will mostly think of feminist and queer movements when I speak of new social movements.

The difficulty to find an unambiguous and parsimonious definition for *new religious movements* is reminiscent of the discussion about the new social movements (Barker 1989: 145; Stenger 1990: 383). Definition criteria once again include a "new middle class" constituency (Barker 1989: 10f; Barker 1995: 166; Knoblauch 1989: 517; Robbins 1988: 4, 44; Snow & Machalek 1984: 181; Turner [1983] 1991: 200), fluid organizational forms and concomitant heterogeneity in action forms and goals (Albanese 1993: 132; Bromley & Shupe 1995: 228; Champion 1993: 213; Hess 1993: 6, 39f; Melton 1995: 270; Robbins 1988: 134), "new" beliefs and values (Barker 1989: 10; Barker 1995: 166; Nelson 1987: 69). Frequently a clarification of the concept has even been avoided altogether and the focus of new religious movement research has been to develop a typology of "innovative types of religion" (Richardson 1983).[30] Since the new religious movement category became salient in the media discourse before it did in the scientific community, it is safe to assume that it was imported

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[29] See section 0.

[30] Richardson's review article and Wallis' (1984) work on "the elementary forms of new religious life" constitute typical examples of such proceeding.

from public discourse.[31] Consequently, in this thesis new religious movements will just like new social movements be regarded empirical events (Wilson 1990: vi).

Partly owing to the ambiguity of the new social movement and new religious movement concepts, a multitude of relationships between the two phenomena has been suggested. There is allegedly some personal and structural overlapping of the constituency of the two movement industries (Paastela 1987: 27f). This observation might have led some authors to suggest that both movement "types" or at least part of their phenotypes share the same origins, namely the alternative counterculture of the 1960s and the rise of postmaterialist values (Hess 1993: 5; Melton 1995: 267; Robbins 1988: 1f; Roof, Carroll & Roozen 1995: 248; Schorsch 1988: 155 Wuthnow 1976: 268).[32] Others claim the new religious movements can be considered part of new social movements or vice versa.[33] There also is some evidence that New Age ideology had an impact on new social movement discourses (Eder 1995b: 16), in particular those of the women's movement (Whittier 1997: 180). Finally, it has been proposed that both movement industries share a societal function, namely the symbolizing of new avenues of action (Robbins 1988: 46). Neither of these relationships has to date undergone empirical investigation, though.

In conclusion, the "newness" of the movements examined here has no analytical quality, but merely points to the historical recency of the collective actors in question (Melucci 1994: 105). This empirical characteristic, though, opens some opportunities for theory construction. It enables to assess the validity of different theories on the emergence of collective actors. In this vein, new social movement theory might despite conceptual shortcomings contain some insights on a theory of "emergent social movements." In the course of this paper I will try to identify those theoretical aspects that might contribute to a theory of that type.

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[31] Van Driel & Richardson (1988: 45 and table 1) show that in the mass media new religious movements as a general category emerged between 1973 and 1976 and "first became salient" after the *Jonestown* tragedy happened in 1978. On the other hand, Beckford & Richardson's (1983) bibliography of social sciences research done in the field does not contain any reference to the category of New Religious Movements published before 1978.

[32] Robbins (1988: 37) at the same time also claims that the new religious movements not necessarily rebel against materialism, though.

[33] Roth (1987: 86) referring to Melucci (ed., 1984) identifies "new spirituality" as one current in the Milan ecology movement. Hummel (1991: 51) conversely asserts that parts of the new social movements are parts of New Age. Nelson (1987: 77) claims the British GAIA movement is a branch of both environmentalist and New Age movement. Barker (1995: 178) contends that New Age is the forerunner of the ecology movement. Albanese (1993: 143) somewhat ambiguously claims that the New Age success can be measured be the rise of the new social movements.

In other words, rather than attempting to redefine the existing categories of new religious and new social movements into analytical tools, which is impossible in my view, they should be treated as empirical events, whose unity calls for an explanation.

Other Movement Types

Beside the "new" movements, the current thesis will also make use of following movement types. *Poor people's movements* are movements which focus on the improvement of the living condition of the least affluent portion of a given population and recruit most of their members from this population stratum. Examples for these movements are movements for the unemployed and the homeless.[34]

Mass movements are movements that are low on we-feeling, but high in numbers(Turner & Killian [1957] 1972: 246). That is, these movements recur mainly to mass behavior, as opposed to collective behavior and collective action proper. New Age itself is a prototypical mass movement.

Finally, *marketed social movements* (Johnston 1980) are subtypes of mass movements. The primary goal of these movements is recruitment for their economic survival. New Age is also an exemplary case for this kind of movement.

The Empirical Case: New Age

Keeping this typology in mind, let me now examine to what extent New Age is a movement.

What is meant by *New Age*? The existing sociological literature has had notorious difficulties in the definition of the phenomenon (Bochinger 1994: 40; Kubiak 1999: 138f; Stenger 1990: 383; van Hove 1999b: 162f). Apart from the question, what kind of sociological phenomenon New Age constitutes, its empirical borders are difficult to draw (Kubiak 1999: 139). There are apparently no analytical criteria that are specific to New Age. In particular, New Age does neither know a clearly demarcated ideology, nor a unifying organization. That certainly prohibits its use as sociological term (van Hove 1999b: 163). New Age should thus be conceptualized as empirical event that encompasses all

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[34] The US civil rights movement constitutes a borderline case in this respect. While there were certainly attempts to alleviate the living conditions of the poorest blacks, most of the constituency of the movement came from comparably better-off African-Americans, clergy and mostly Anglo-Saxon middle-class students (McAdam 1982). Notwithstanding the fact that colored people have been and still are financially and politically worse off than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, it seems sensible to assume that the civil rights movement a s a w h o l e has not been primarily class-based, though. Thus, here it will not be subsumed under the poor people's movement category.

organizational forms and rhetorics that are associated with New Age by the relevant actors, i.e., those persons that engage either as protagonists, antagonists or bystander public in the construction of the identity of New Age.

The fact that New Age is not an analytical category might partly explain why sociological theory in general and social movement theory in particular until now has largely ignored the New Age phenomenon (York 1995: 3). Instead, New Age is usually examined within the sociology of religion, i.e., church/sect theory or the "new religious movement" framework.[35]

Of course, one could also explain the absence of New Age in movement studies with the fact that New Age is no movement in the sociological sense. And, indeed, the conceptualization of New Age as an audience cult (Finke & Stark 1992: 245; Stark & Bainbridge 1980; Stark & Bainbridge 1985), a clinic (Lofland & Richardson 1984), a business sector (Deutscher Bundestag 1998; Zinser 1997), a fad, a label without empirical referent (Bochinger 1994: 35), part of "new spirituality movements and culture" (Shimazono 1999), or any other form of collectivity or process, seems to lend itself equally well or even better to the analysis of New Age.

Against a social movement framework speaks in particular the scarcity of collective action proper — integral part of most current social movement definitions — within New Age. Millions of people have bought New Age books and there exists a veritable market for New Age practices such as rolfing, channeling, etc., but these phenomena amount only to collective or mass behavior. The most collective action proper New Age has invoked was during the 1987 *harmonic convergence* festival that brought together more than 5,000 people at Mt. Shasta and many more in various places around the globe in their quest for the Age of Aquarius.[36] Some pagan covens also mirror organizationally the grassroots groups of the new social movements. Overall, though, New Age is marked by a conspicuous absence of collective action proper. For instance, even though the harmonic convergence celebration does constitute a formidable act of coordinated action, this collective action was not directed towards the common group goal. Rather, it symbolized the common belief among

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[35] Surprisingly, there has been very little communication between scholars of "New Religious Movements" and other movement theorists (Swatos 1993: xii), although they all work *nominally* on the movement phenomenon. Frequently there are calls for a closer cooperation between the two fields (Diani 1993: 111f; Hannigan 1993: 1; Johnston et al. 1994: 3; Robbins 1988: 163, 192; Zald & McCarthy [1982] 1987: 79), but until now only a few studies on new religious movements that utilize resource mobilization theory (Bromley & Shupe 1979; Bromley & Shupe 1995; Shupe & Bromley 1980; Snow [1976] 1993).

participants that a new age is dawning without actually attempting to bring about this new society. Like in most millenarian movements, "a fundamental vagueness about the actual way in which the new society will be brought about" (Hobsbawm [1959] 1971: 58) prevails. What is more, at the center of New Age activity are practices like hypnosis, astrology, holistic nutrition, self-empowerment, all of which are — beyond their symbolic meaning — essentially individual, not collective goods.

However, political passivity and scarcity of collective action proper does not warrant the exclusion of New Age from movement research. Apart from the difficulty of determining empirically, if and to what extent movement goals include social change (Giugni 1998; Halfmann & Japp 1993), an *a priori* exclusion of movements whose members have, so to speak, not (yet?) undergone the process of "cognitive liberation" (McAdam 1982), falls into the familiar trap of sampling on one category of the dependent variable. If one wants to understand the dynamics of social change, a sole focus on the agents of social change might overlook some important obstacles to that change (Williams & Kubal 1999). Therefore, as "[w]e lack studies of negative cases, as when frames fail to stimulate collective action" (Benford 1997: 412), the analysis of New Age with the help of social movement theory is desirable.

While the study on New Age furthers the understanding of social movements, the social movement framework offsets a weakness this study shares with most literature on new religious movements, namely a lack of control groups (Robbins 1988: 17, 61). As social movement theory is a fairly well empirically grounded field, most hypotheses in this study have already been tested on other movements. The current study is thus largely a falsification attempt of an established theory with the help of an under-researched study object.

A theoretical reason for the control group deficiency also exists. As the construction of collective identity is at the center of the study, groups which have not succeeded in the creation of an identity would have been control groups. The trouble is, there is a infinite multitude of such groups. Worse still, since most potential collective actors have not created any form of identity, we are unable to identify potential collective actors on the basis of concepts already existing in public discourse. For, if there exists such a concept, this mere

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[36] Klaas, Tim: "Life Sprouts in Shadow of Mt. St. Helens," *The Arizona Republic*, May 20, 1995, A25.

existence indicates at least a rudimentary basis for a collective identity.[37] Hence, it is up to the scholar's imagination to construct potential collectivities that qualify for the potential construction of identity. Traditionally, students of social movements have solved that problem by introducing somewhat "objective" grievances along which movements might form. However, this approach faces serious shortcomings. The sheer quantity of existing grievances might prove it difficult to identify their complete universe. True, it might still be possible to carefully select at least some of the known grievances. However, there do not exist "objective" grievances. Once a grievance is "detected," or better: generated (and communicated), its very existence as a communicable concept constitutes a frame upon which a collective identity could be constructed, the first step towards an identity has thus already been accomplished (Japp 1984: 318). In other words, the identification of grievances only shifts the problem of the search for groups lacking a the basis for a collective identity back in time.[38]

Sociology of Religion Approaches

New religious movement research is certainly not central to sociology.

> "[T]he subject matter is regarded as academically inconsequential, and the subject area is, within the sociology of religion, something of a pariah, whilst sociology of religion itself has been called a Cinderella within sociology." (Wilson 1990:5)

Indeed,

> "[i]t is hard, from the vantage point of the 1990s, to remember how central religion seemed to the founding social scientists. […] Despite recent attempts to rescue a more "cultural" Durkheim, sociologists continue to forget that the author of *The Division of Labor in Society*, and *The Rules of Sociological Method* went on to write *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Weber's essay on the Protestant ethic retains its place in the canon, but more because of what it has to say about capitalism than because it is a book on religion.
>
> Important books continue to be written on the subject of religion, to be sure, but seldom do any achieve centrality in the disciplinary discourses of the social sciences. From Berger, Bellah, Eisenstadt and Swanson through Wuthnow and Stark, major works on religion remain compartmentalized." (Calhoun 1991: ix)

As a consequence of this isolation, many authors who are concerned with the new religious movements are not primarily motivated by sociological curiosity. Instead, they have arrived

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[37] Snow (1993 [1976]: 231f) makes a similar point with respect to collective action as dependent variable.

[38] For a further elaboration of these problems, see section 3.2.2.

at their topic through personal experiences with one of the movements or their antagonists (e.g., Albanese 1993: 137; Heelas 1996: 10; Lamers 1994: 7; Melton [1986] 1992b: ix; Melton 1995: 265; Robbins 1988: 203). Such emotional relationship to the research object naturally inhibits the scrutinization of either pro-movement or anti cult movement discourses.

Emblematic for the problems that arise from an emotionally attached participation in new religious movements, but unusually frank and unapologetic is the following justification of a research agenda:

> "The writer began practicing with this [meditation] group with no intention of doing a sociological report, so the following account reflects much of his own experience as insider. […] The account is modest enough and has the v i r t u e of passing a member's test of validity." (Preston 1982: 263, emphasis mine)

From a constructionist viewpoint, this virtue turns out as a vice, as the author is unable and even unwilling to engage in second-order observation, which is a necessary precondition for the successful application of constructionism (Luhmann 1990: 20f).

The paucity of new religious movement research is not restricted to authors immersed in new religious movements or their foes, in particular when it comes to New Age. Peculiar outsider explanations for the rise of New Age include among others the claims that "California with its sun-drenched beaches, fertile coastal valleys, rugged mountains, and harsh deserts" (Lucas 1995: 15) helped to bring about New Age.[39] Even such renowned and sensible scholars as William Sims Bainbridge (1997: 369) resort to dubious metaphors when it comes to New Age:

> "In pluralistic modern societies, the religious system is like a pot of stew. The big potatoes, carrots, and chunks of beef are the major mainstream denominations. Each one has clear edges. The liquid surrounding them is the general cultural residue of faith, such things as belief in God and familiarity with the concept of messiah, which permeate the denominations but also exists outside them. The celery and onions, which have fallen to pieces in the cooking, are alternative religious traditions that are represented by a number of small organizations and have contributed their distinctive flavors to the juice. The tomatoes are practically resolved into liquid, so they must represent forms of collective behavior that are poorly organized but add substantially to the entire recipe; they are the New Age."

One is tempted to compare this statement with similarly equivocal statements made within the New Age literature itself.

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[39] The same author (Lucas 1995: 27) also cites Theodor W. Adorno and Herbert Marcuse as intellectual fathers of New Age.

Stage	Movement Theory Equivalent	Movement Theory Paradigm
1 Tension	Strain	Collective Behavior
2 Religious Problem-Solving Perspective	Ideology	Collective Behavior
3 Self-Definition as Religious Seeker	Loss of Identity	New Social Movements
4 Encounter with Cult	Network Recruitment	Political Process
5 Affective Bond with Cult Member	Affective Bond to Movement Participants	Political Process
6 Extra-Cult Attachments Low	Uprooted Individuals	Mass Society
7 High Intra-Cult Interaction	High Intra-Movement Interaction	New Social Movements, Political Process

Table 2-2 Stages of the Lofland/Stark Conversion Model and their Equivalents in Movement Theory

To be sure, not all analyses of new religious movements are this a-theoretical. The more theoretically driven explanations focus mainly on the ideologies and organizational forms of the new religious movements and bear some striking similarities with the collective behavior and new social movement theories in movement research. One can discern at least four distinct approaches to new religious movements within sociology of religion:

(1) the Lofland/Stark model to recruitment to cults that has been developed on data collected on the *Unification Church*;

(2) the development of various church/sect typologies to come to grips with the recently developed new religions;

(3) the new religious movement approach, which analyzes what is particular of the new religious movements;

(4) the religious economy approach to new religious movements.

These four approaches will now be examined.

The Lofland-Stark Model

More than 30 years after its first formulation (Lofland & Stark 1965), the Lofland-Stark model of conversions to cults holds still considerable influence onto the research on religious movements (Bainbridge 1997: 156). The model posits seven stages in the conversion of an individual to a cult. Table 2-2 summarizes these stages and identifies parallels to conceptualizations in movement research.

The Lofland/Stark model theorizes that a tension between the aspiration of individuals and their perceived actual situation stands at the beginning of conversion processes to new

religious movements. If one conceptualizes "conversion" as "recruitment" to a sect, this thesis is basically identical to the starting point of relative deprivation theory (Stark & Bainbridge 1979: 284f). But while movement research has abandoned relative deprivation as a viable explanation, the tension thesis still pops up in accounts of New Age and other new religious movements (Beckford 1977: 236f; English-Lueck 1990: 10; Hannigan 1993: 2; Nelson 1987: 85-87; Robbins 1988: 60; Snow & Machalek 1984: 181).

The second stage of the model requires that prospective converts are focused on a religious problem-solving perspective due to their prior life experiences. This requirement likewise has an equivalent in the collective behavior tradition, namely its symbolic-interactionist focus on the importance of ideas. Unlike relative deprivation, this element has been retained in current social movement approaches, namely as "cultural resonances," which play a central role in the identity-oriented paradigm.

Lofland and Stark's third element, the suggestion that converts are religious seekers, is one of the most popular arguments in explanations of new religious movements (Aidala 1985: 297; Champion 1993: 207; DuPertuis 1987: 102; Ley & Martin 1993: 228; Mol 1985: 95; Stenger 1990: 402; Stenger 1993: 43; Zaretsky 1994: 199). This argument finds its equivalent in the identity quest, which is at the heart of the new social movements approach. Both theories suggest that converts/recruits are alienated from larger society. This alienation leads them to a quest for community, which both new religious movements and new social movements supposedly satisfy.

Predisposed by this identity quest, potential converts come into contact with sects during the fourth conversion stage. Thereupon they form, fifth, an affective bond to a convert. Stages four and five have their movement theory equivalents in the political process model with its emphasis on network structures.

Lofland and Stark's sixth conjecture is that successful converts have only weak bonds to extra-cult persons appears, as if it would have been taken straight from the old mass society paradigm, that has fallen into disrepute in movement research already in the early 1960s (König 1997: 36).

In contrast, the last element of the conversion model is a no-brainer from the point of contemporary movement theories. Both political process model and the identity oriented paradigm would concur that high interactions within the cult fosters the stable affiliation with it.

In sum, while the Lofland-Stark model contains some valuable insights into recruitment processes of new religious movements, all of the processes described in the model have equivalents in one or more of the different movement paradigms. Without any loss for generality, the model itself can be ignored, which frees the theory developed here from the controversial assumption of sequentiality made in the Lofland-Stark model.

Cult/Sect Theory

A second strand of research within the sociology of religion paradigm of interest to students of New Age are the various discussions that surround a church/cult/sect typology. The debate on such a typology is highly emotionally charged, because of the pejorative character of the cult label in everyday language.[40] In fact, the two scholarly internet newsgroups on religious issues I am subscribed to (NUREL-L and H-AmRel) recurrently feature debates on the usefulness of the usage of the cult term in social science because of its potential derogatory utilization. For constructionist epistemology, which distinguishes sharply between analytical categories and everyday language, this debate is of little relevance. Certainly, in the popularization of research results the cult label will entail a stigma, but for intra-scientific purposes definitions of the cult do not necessarily carry a normative burden.

Cult/sect typologies are popular in the study of new religious movements. For instance, the theoretical framework of Michael York's (1995) monograph on New Age almost exclusively deals with the development of a fruitful typology of churches, cults and sects.

A church/sect typology valuable for present purposes distinguishes between churches, sects and cults on the bases of their relations to other collective actors. The most commonly used distinction between churches on the one hand and sects and cults on the other emphasizes their different relations to larger society. Churches in this reading are world-affirmative, while sects and cults vie to distinguish themselves from outside society (e.g., Bellah & Madsen 1996: 243). Cults are distinguished from sects through their organizational genesis. Sects originate from churches that are firmly institutionally and ideologically established in a given environment. They are splinter groups from churches, which means that their ideology draws heavily on the mainstream religion they stem from. Sects usually command already at the time of their inception over a considerable membership

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[40] In francophone and germanophon environments the terms *secte* and *Sekte* are also largely of pejorative nature in everyday language, which results additional complications in international social research.

base and well-developed organizational structures. Cults, on the contrary, start basically from scratch. They feature either completely novel belief systems or beliefs that have been imported from socially (and usually also geographically) distant environments into a new environment. Importantly, the relative novelty of cults means that an adoption of their ideology requires considerably more cognitive skills than the espousal of church or sect dogmas that are mapped on familiar conceptual terrain. One can thus expect that cults will develop in the upper educational echelons of society (Stark 1986: 218).

Indeed, in the US, the likelihood of having participated in common New Age practices or groups — Yoga, *Transcendental Meditation*, or Zen Buddhist groups — is significantly higher among persons who did attend at least s o m e college than those who did not (*ibid.*, p. 222). At the same time, the probability of being "born again," that is belonging to a fundamentalist Christian sect, decreases with educational attainment (*ibid.*, p. 223). It seems plausible that cult elements of New Age prevent the movement to recruit extensively from the strata of society that are untrained in the use of symbolic capital. However, as we will see, New Age does not appeal to the highly educated either, but instead is rooted in the low middle class, in particular white-collar workers. In this vein, chapter 6 will reveal that New Age ideology draws only nominally on Eastern religions, but is grounded in Christian thought.

The New Religious Movement Paradigm

While discussions of church/sect typologies are at the center of the entire sociology of religion field, the new religious movements subfield revolves around the supposed peculiarity of its research object. Even less than the new social movements approach discussed below, new religious movement theory can be considered a unitary phenomenon. Nevertheless, there are two important arguments that reoccur within the writings of scholars that have devoted much of their work to the study of new religious movements. These two arguments are:

(1) The emergence of new religious movements is closely tied to the rise of postmaterialism in modern society.

(2) New religious movements do not employ coercion in their recruitment.

A shift to "postmaterialist" values (Inglehart 1990) is (often tacitly) at the center of new religious movement approaches to New Age (Brown 1992: 91f; Heelas 1996: 140f; Schorsch 1988: 155). Combined with sustained detraditionalization and individuation of religion (Heelas 1996: 172), this value shift is considered to be at the root of the recruitment success

of new religious movements. Whereas before religion took place in highly institutionalized bodies, the post-war generation considers religion an individual choice and, thus, chooses religion "cafeteria style" (Roof, Carroll & Roozen 1995: 248). As a consequence, a multiplicity of new religious movements has emerged. These movements display emphasis on deliberate fluidity in organizational forms (Barker 1989: 11; Bromley & Shupe 1995: 228; Roof, Carroll & Roozen 1995: 252f), which is mirrored by an ideological ambiguity (Barker 1985: 38; Champion 1993: 203f; Hess 1993: 4 and passim; Knoblauch 1989: 510; Sperry 1991: 242; Wuthnow 1985: 187, 194). Thereby the movements cater to the different religious *Weltanschauungen*, whose diversity was made possible by the value shift. In essence, new religious movements are a reaction to the identity crises of the postmaterialist youth (Bellah 1976: 342).

At first glance, this seems to be a plausible causal chain. On hindsight, though, it contains several theoretical and empirical flaws. The theoretical problems will be discussed in the section that discusses the postmaterialism debate in movement theory (section 0). The empirical adequacy of the theory is tenuous, at best. Already the fact that Max Weber has based his ideal type of a voluntary association the 19th century protestant sect sheds some doubt on the uniqueness of situation with a multiplicity of "religious seekers" at the end of the 20th century. But even, if one considers only at post-war figures, the arrival of the postmaterialist cohorts did not lead to an increased number of cult formations (Finke & Stark 1992: 240-242). The culture shift thesis is, thus, at odds with empirical reality.

A second thread that runs through new religious movement research is rejection of brainwashing hypotheses (e.g., Melton forthcoming). This research focus, of course, must be seen in reaction to the popularity of the claim that new religious movements use coercion in their recruitment and physically and psychically harm their adherents. Here, new religious movement researcher certainly have contributed to the understanding of the movements in question. Yet, a research field should hardly solely focus on r e j e c t i o n of hypotheses from the extra-scientific realm.

Many further, less frequently made conjectures about new religious movements exist in the literature. All of these hypotheses are marred by the fact that the new religious movements are a category of little, if any analytical value. For instance, in a review article on new religious movement research, Eileen Barker — a major figure in the research field — posits that new religious movements display a clear them/us divide. She then goes on to

locate the decidedly universalist New Age movement at "the lower end of the continuum," but still considers New Age a new religious movement (Barker 1995: 166). Such lenient interpretations of the empirical validity of theoretical assumptions, of course, render any theory unfalsifiable. Indeed, if one were to salvage new religious movements as an analytical concept, one certainly would have to exclude New Age from the category, as it "differs considerably from the other groups" (Melton [1986] 1992a: 163). A further examination of new religious movement theory is, thus, dispensable.

Religious Markets

A fourth, fairly recent development in the sociology of religion is a political economy approach. This approach has been developed chiefly by Rodney Stark and Laurence Iannaccone. These authors have forcefully shown the utility of modeling the interaction between and within religious groups as market behavior. Among others, the shifting success of different religious groups can parsimoniously be explained through such modeling (Finke & Stark 1992). Economic reasoning can also show that seemingly irrational symbolic religious acts, such as the shaving of one's head, can substantially reduce the free-rider-problem in collective action (Iannaccone 1992) Such reasoning also reveals that the relative weakness of new religious movements in Europe when compared to North America is at least partly a result of a tighter regulation of the religious economy by the state in West European countries (Stark 1993; Stark & Iannaccone 1994: 222). In particular for New Age, whose main organizational bases are for-profit enterprises, this seems to be an extremely promising approach. However, resource mobilization theory in its initial formulation (McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987) already long time ago adopted a fairly analogous approach to analyze social movements. Unlike sociology of religion, social movement studies can recur to a rich tradition with respect to this approach. Just as for other sociology of religion approaches, the door is open for an integration the religious economy approach into social movement theory.

Social Movement Approaches

Let me now examine the major schools in social movement research. Naturally, these schools do not represent unitary paradigms. Instead, vigorous debates within each of these schools occur. Nevertheless, numerous agreements within each school warrant the assumption of some degree of internal homogeneity. The most problematic association made here is probably the fusion of resource mobilization theory proper with political process theory,

since many of the researchers working in the latter paradigm distaste being labeled resource mobilization theorists.[41]

Three older paradigms that have by now largely lost their influence on current social movement theorizing will open the literature review. These are *mass society* theory, the *collective behavior* tradition and Alain Touraine's *action sociology*. Afterwards, a closer look at the strategy-oriented paradigms, that is, analytical Marxism, resource mobilization theory and its offspring, the political process model, will be reviewed. Finally, identity-oriented paradigms, i.e., new social movement and constructionist theories, will be evaluated. The present section is rounded up with assessment on, how the different theory strands can be connected.

Mass Society Theory

As will be shown later, in the light of the evidence from New Age William Kornhauser's ([1959] 1960) seemingly outdated formulation of mass society theory would deserve a, if sharply qualified, renaissance.

Developed under the impression of the rise of totalitarian movements in Germany and Austria, fascism in Italy, McCarthyism in the US, and under the theoretical influence of Le Bon's (1895) *Psychologie des Foules*, but even more that of Alexis de Tocqueville and Hannah Arendt, mass society theory postulates that social movements arise most easily in those environments, where political elites can mobilize from a large pool of persons poorly connected among themselves. In *mass society* most individuals are only indirectly linked to each other via a central authority. A movement forms when agitators redirect the behavior of these social isolates using modern propaganda methods. Social movements thus constitute mass behavior, not collective action proper. The focus of movement behavior is remote from everyday life, it erupts spontaneously and is inherently unstable. Such mobilization patterns emerge, if cohesive groups, which could counteract deviance from traditional behavior modes, are rare in civil society.

As plausible as these theses are, even those movements for which they were initially developed, failed to produce convincing evidence for mass society theory. For instance, the German nazi movement had its strongholds in communities with strong voluntary

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[41] This holds particularly true in the case of Doug McAdam (McAdam 1988: 126; Marx & McAdam 1994: 80-86).

associations and dense community networks (Heberle 1951: 228; Oberschall 1973: 108f). Consequently, the NSDAP was not strongest in large metropolitan areas, where one would expect most disconnected individuals, but instead the Nazis achieved their most impressive election returns in rural communities (Brustein & Falter 1995: 89; Kater 1983: 156; Lipset 1959: 416; Wagner 1998: 79) and recruited disproportionally many persons from rural origins (Brustein 1996: 18f; Wagner 1998: 88).

Despite these empirical refutations of mass society theory, the current disdain towards Kornhauser's ([1959] 1960) conjectures seems premature, not the least because oftentimes a wholesale rejection of his theory is rooted in a selective reading of *The Politics of Mass Society*. A common misconception of mass society theory purports that the theory would claim that completely isolated individuals would be most susceptible to movement recruitment (e.g., Ullrich 1998: 16). Melucci (1996: 64f) then is confident to proclaim that "contrary to the tenets of [Kornhauser's] mass society [theory], isolated and rootless individuals never mobilize." However, Kornhauser ([1959] 1960: 90) himself asserts that

> "the individual who is t o t a l l y isolated (that is, without even family ties) for long period is not likely to posses that minimum of personal organization required by collective activity, the loss of all family life leads to personal deviance — in the extreme case, mental disorders and suicides — rather than to mass behavior."

What mass society theory really suggests is that those individuals, who are bound by membership in voluntary associations — "intermediary groups" in Kornhauser's theory — are less likely to become recruited by mass movements than those who are solely embedded in family, neighborhood and friendship networks. This thesis can be restated as the importance of "structural availability" (Snow [1976] 1993: 208) of individuals for recruitment opportunities. Chapter 8 will show that this availability is crucial in the case of New Age.

Several of Kornhauser's propositions do hold true with respect to New Age, even though the theory was based on the interpretation of a very different type of movement, surely a virtue many of the currently higher acclaimed theories do not achieve.[42] New Age fulfills three of the four criteria for mass movements.

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[42] I am thinking in particularly of Inglehart's (1990) approach to new social movements that by definition could not be extended to, say, labor or fascist movements and which is silent on the contemporary resurgence of ethno-nationalism.

"[m]ass movements generally have the following characteristics: their objectives are remote and extreme; they favor activist modes of intervention in the social order; they mobilize uprooted and atomized sections of the population; they lack an internal structure of independent groups (such as regional or functional units with some freedom of action)." (Kornhauser [1959] 1960: 47)

Mass society theory describes the structural bases of New Age reasonably well, as the movement recruits many unattached persons and contains only few and weak regional or grassroots groups. On the ideological level, New Age might not hold "extreme" views, but its goals, which refer to spirituality and practices stemming from imagined exotic cultures and scientific theories, are certainly remote from New Agers' everyday experiences. Hence, New Age only lacks the extremism in action and ideology Kornhauser attributed to mass movements.

True, the absence of national New Age organizations precludes the unmodified application of mass society theory to New Age, but this deficiency can explain, why New Age fails the fourth criterion for mass movements, namely the activist orientation. There simply is no structure through which the "masses" of New Age could be mobilized for collective action proper, nor is there any New Age leader or leadership group that would be interested in the erection of such an organization. Finally, the mobilization of a disconnected mass does not seem to be attractive for contemporary elites. But I am getting ahead of the argument. It shall suffice at this point to caution against a premature indiscriminate rejection of mass society theory.

Collective Behavior and Relative Deprivation

Unlike mass society theory, the classic *collective behavior* or *relative deprivation* paradigms are in little danger to fall into complete oblivion, since many of their elements resurface in identity theory. At the core of collective behavior theory lies the conception of social movements as irrational expressions of economically deprived masses during periods of rapid social change.[43] In the past, this view has been renounced by all major theory schools relevant to the analysis of new social movements (Bader 1991: 15f; Dalton, Kuechler & Bürklin 1990: 7; Donati 1984: 837; Marx & McAdam 1994: 89; McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987: 16f; Melucci 1989: 191; Piven & Cloward 1977: 12; Schmitt 1990: 26). In new

religious movement research, relative deprivation approaches still played an important role until the late 1980s (Gussner & Berkowitz 1988: 137), but here, too, forceful critiques have been presented (Beckford 1977: 236f; Nelson 1987: 85-87; Robbins 1988: 60; Shupe & Bromley 1985: 60). These critiques will probably ultimately also lead to the disbandonment of relative deprivation concepts in studies on new religious movements.

Two empirical observations contributed decisively to the demise of relative deprivation theories. Most importantly, "grievances are everywhere, movements are not" (Japp 1984: 316). Yet, relative deprivation theory is unable to predict those potential social cleavages, which lead to social movements. In addition, constituency and action repertoire of newer movements are at odds with two central assumptions of collective behavior theory. The members and adherents of these movements can hardly be considered socially deprived: new social movements recruit overproportionally from the "new middle classes" (Brand 1987: 42; Dalton, Kuechler & Bürklin 1990: 7; Klandermans 1991: 27; Offe 1985: 828ff; Rochon 1988: 16f); new religious movements draw slightly more on less educated and wealthy individuals, who nevertheless can still be considered privileged (Barker 1989: 14; Hess 1993: 5; Knoblauch 1989: 517; Robbins 1988: 4, 44; Schneider 1991: 53; Stenger 1990: 400; Turner [1983] 1991: 200). In addition, the continuous organizational efforts of the new movements as well as the conscious and planned selection of their action repertoire defy notions of irrational "short-circuiting" (Smelser [1962] 1978a; Smelser 1962b). In short, one of "[t]he only [two] sociological ideas that ever turned out to be demonstrably wrong [… is] 'relative deprivation'" (Davis 1994: 181).

Certain other elements of collective behavior theories are nevertheless rectified in more contemporary theories (Hannigan 1993: 7; Neidhardt & Rucht 1991: 425f). However, most collective behavior conjectures have either been unintentionally incorporated into newer paradigms and merely reveal flaws of the newer approaches,[44] or they have been redefined in the light of newer theories and can hence no longer really be considered part of original relative deprivation theory (Kuhn [1962] 1976: 113ff).[45] Conjectures of the latter kind will be

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[43] For a more complete introduction into one influential strand of collective behavior theories cf. Smelser (1962a). Turner & Killian (1957) is a, if not the, classic formulation of mainstream collective behavior theory. Marx & Wood (1975) offer an insightful overview of research done within this paradigm.

[44] See my discussion of the structuralist approaches to collective identity (section 0).

[45] Joppke (1993: 9f), Neidhardt & Rucht (1993: 306), Piven & Cloward (1992: 301f) and Snow & Machalek (1984: 181) seem to advocate a return of relative deprivation theory in the latter sense.

discussed in their theoretical sites and a closer examination of collective behavior theory on its own grounds will be skipped here.

Action Sociology

The third theory tradition that will not be examined at great length is Alain Touraine's action sociology. Although some consider Touraine "the most important theorist of social movements" (Eder 1996: 7) and notwithstanding the fact that he definitely heavily influenced the here advocated constructionist paradigm, his approach faces major drawbacks.

Touraine postulates that within each society a central social conflict represented by a specific social movement exists (Touraine 1985: 760). Such *a priori* introduction of hypotheses clearly violates the epistemological axiom of empirical falsifiability advocated here. Worse, if one does test his axiom empirically, there is little evidence to support it (Brand 1996: 53). In addition Touraine's theoretical concepts frequently remain ambiguous (Cohen 1985: 701, 707; Rucht 1991b: 370), the adequacy of his methods is questionable (Japp 1984: 327; Rucht 1991b: 376f), and his receptivity of competing theories is underdeveloped (Gamson 1983: 814). Since the less idiosyncratic elements of his work are also incorporated in other approaches,[46] it seems reasonable to defer a separate analysis of action sociology.

Strategy and Identity

That leaves the strategy and identity approaches to social movements, which over the last decades have dominated social movement research.[47] The *strategy paradigm* surfaced in the early 1970s (Gamson 1975b; McCarthy & Zald 1973; Oberschall 1973; Tilly 1978). In 1980s it became almost uncontested throughout North America. At the time when strategy approaches enjoyed almost a monopoly in the US, West European sociology (Brand 1985; Melucci 1980; Roth & Rucht 1987) developed a very different approach to (new) social movements, which centered on identity. Despite the fact that a political scientist at the University of Michigan (Inglehart 1990) was a core figure in its genesis, the identity paradigm initially failed to affect American sociology. Although already in 1985 the major tenets of the identity approach were published in a major US journal (Eder 1985; Melucci

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[46] Schmitt (1990: 30) suggests that the works of Touraine and Melucci entail considerable similarities. Melucci, however, does not claim the existence of one central societal conflict.

1985; Offe 1985), it took until the very late 1980s and early 1990s before a major exchange between the two theory traditions took place (Klandermans & Tarrow 1988). Beginning with the anthology on *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (Morris & Mueller 1992), identity oriented approaches have become increasingly successful in the US (Benford 1997), while resource mobilization theory's influence on European theories of social movements was already in 1994 past its peak (Eder 1994: 41). Today the two paradigms are have formed a fruitful symbiosis.

Strategy

The starting point of nearly all rational choice accounts of social movements is Mancur Olson's *Logic of Collective Action*. It is, thus, imperative to start the present discussion with his account on collective action.

Rational Choice Proper

Olson frames the collective action problem in game theoretic terminology[48] as the problem of the production of a "public good,"[49] which he models as a n-person prisoners' dilemma.[50] The dominant strategy of every member of a group that would benefit from the collective production of a collective good is "not to participate in the group effort." This situation leads to universal defection, i.e., the good will not be produced, unless additional provisions are made.

Taxonomy of Groups

Olson develops a typology of groups differently equipped to engage in collective action. The probability of the production of a collective good depends on size of the smallest subgroup, whose members would expect a benefit from the production of the good, if they alone would produce the good. A privileged group is a group where one individual alone constitutes the

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[47] As there, of course, is no uniform American or West European sociology, all following remarks on the history of theories should be read as referring to the *prima facie* assessment of the field.

[48] I assume the reader is familiar with the basic terminology of game theory. A strategy is "dominant" for a player, if it is preferred over all other strategies regardless of which strategies are chosen by the remaining players.

[49] A "public good" with respect to a specific group is a good that once produced can not or only under excessive cost be denied to any member of the group in question. A lighthouse or the police of a state are examples for collective goods (all sailors and all citizens of the latter state are the respective groups in these examples).

[50] A prisoner's dilemma denotes a game, in which the dominant strategy of each player is independent from the other player's actions and the execution of these strategies leads to a pareto-suboptimal outcome.

latter subgroup.[51] In small groups the contribution of the individual member constitutes a significant share of the overall group effort. Medium-size groups need some organization to achieve the group goal. In large groups such as social movements, the contributions of individual actors are neglectably small. These groups require selective incentives in addition to the organization for the production of their collective goods. Here, the "by-product theory" applies. This theory states that large groups can only engage in collective action, if an existing formal organization that provides group members with non-collective goods, i.e., selective incentives, already exists.

The Critique

Olson's account has generated manifold criticisms, even within the rational choice paradigm, itself.

For instance, by-product theory merely shifts the problem of collective action towards a collective good back in time. How an organization, a collective good itself, can be established in the first place remains unexplored (Hardin 1982: 34; Heckathorn 1989: 80; Elster 1989: 41).[52]

Second, Olson's prisoner's dilemma is a one-shot game, ignoring the possibility of an emergence of collective action over time. In fact, the most parsimonious illustration for a Olson's model is probably an escape panic (Brown 1965: 737ff), an important reminder of the fact that individual and group rationality are fairly unrelated. In contrast, one can show that in an infinitely repeated n-person prisoner's dilemma an "evolution of cooperation" can evolve, if there are at least some individuals, who unconditionally cooperate (Axelrod 1989). However, most of the conditions that must be fulfilled to arrive at a cooperation situation (complete information, infinite or indefinite repetition, pairing of the participants) are most likely not fulfilled in most real world phenomena exceeding a certain group size limit. Thus, in most cases Olson's model might be a better model of reality than its dynamic competitors.[53]

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[51] Strictly speaking, in this case there is no prisoner's dilemma, since there is no dominant strategy for this individual independent from the choices of the other individuals. His her strategy would be "cooperation", if all other group members defect and "defect, if a sufficient number of other group members cooperate to produce the collective good.

[52] Olson ([1982] 1985: 31) himself acknowledges this problem.

[53] Another problem of iterated games is to find the correct game for the real-world phenomenon (Hardin 1982: 157; Schüßler 1990: 33f; Swistak 1992: 104). What is more there is a "bewildering wealth" (Hechter

The selective incentive thesis stands upon much weaker ground. If one looks at most organizations that foster collective action, it becomes apparent that these incentives usually are of minuscule monetary value (Hardin 1982: 104). If, on the other hand, one introduces (unspecified) "soft incentives," i.e., incentives of no or small economic value, Olson's theory easily turns into a tautology (Fireman & Gamson 1979: 20; Marx Ferree 1992: 32; Miller 1994: 6; Turner [1983] 1991: 105).[54] At best arguments of the type

> "[r]ational egoists should be just as willing to evade their corporate obligations in the family or the community as in the workplace. If there is less free riding in the family than in the firm, than this ultimately has to be explained by the family's greater control capacity;" (Hechter 1987: 147)

while at the same time,

> "[s]ociability is one of the most important immanent goods that groups provide,"(*ibid*.: 47)

can be understood as semantic exercises. What is more, selective incentives are not only necessary, but also sufficient to explain a n y action in the rational choice paradigm, a separate theory of collective action hence would not be necessary (Fireman & Gamson 1979: 11).

Empirical evidence shows, that in cases where most individuals expect most other persons with the same collective goal to defect, some persons will nevertheless voluntarily contribute (Oliver 1984). Moreover, in many cases individuals who participate in collective action do not view their participatory efforts as costs but as benefits (Elster 1989: 45; Hirschman 1982: 82).[55] Individuals also might expect that their participation would trigger further participation in collective action, thereby increasing their own expected utility from cooperation (Gould 1993: 182; Kimura 1989: 265). Finally, often individuals do not estimate their individual efficacy correctly, or do not acknowledge the free-rider-problem at all (Hardin 1982: 112; Opp 1991: 217). To sum up, it seems that *The Logic of Collective Action* can at best explain

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1992: 35) of equilibria for these games, which means that the cooperation outcome is only a possibility, but not a necessity. The probability of this possibility in addition seems to be quite low (Schüßler 1990: 51).

[54] Olson (1965: 160, Fn. 91) points to the insufficiency of this solution. The same objection applies also to Levi's (1991: 135) and Essers' (1994: 27) suggestion to incorporate norms into the utility function.

[55] Firestone (1978) refers to "rioting for fun," Taylor & Whittier (1992: 119) show that the participation in the lesbian-feminist movement actually provides the benefit of self-exploration, "'giving women energy'". Similarly, according to Eder/Staggenborg/Sudderth (1995: 493) participants at the National Women's Music Festival "commented on the festival's atmosphere of high 'energy.'" Iannaccone (1992: 272) claims that religion as a "club good" entails positive returns on "participatory crowding".

the inexistence of collective action proper, but not its existence (Dalton, Kuechler & Bürklin 1990: 8; Fireman & Gamson 1979: 9; Hardin 1982: 11ff; Klandermans & Tarrow 1988: 4; Tarrow 1989: 12).

Although Olson himself has been very reluctant to apply his conjectures to collective goods that cannot easily be quantified in monetary terms (Olson 1965: 160), his explanation of the absence of collective action has become the null hypothesis in both analytical Marxism and resource mobilization theory. So to speak in a package deal, the strategic-rational actor concomitantly entered these paradigms, although "[o]ne perfectly reasonable conclusion to deduce from Olson's logic is that only irrational[ly motivated actors] can explain collective action" (Marwell & Oliver 1993: 5).[56]

Analytical Marxism

Analytical Marxism, shunned by European movement research,[57] is probably the paradigm most intimately connected to "pure" rational choice theories.[58] Unlike orthodox Marxists, which have difficulties to explain the existence of new social movements,[59] analytical Marxists are freed from historicist fetters (Roemer 1984: 201)[60] and functionalist traps (Elster 1985: 28f; Lash & Urry 1984: 34),[61] but at the same time can prey on the host of hypothesis developed by Marx and his collaborators.

Unsurprisingly, Marxist classes are central to this paradigm. Since classes constitute the functional equivalent of collective identity in non-Marxist theories, their discussion will be postponed until following chapter. Likewise, the "technology of collective action" as discussed by analytical Marxists shares so many similarities with the political opportunity structure of resource mobilization theory that this conceptualization can be analyzed in the discussion of the more familiar paradigm.

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[56] In an apparent faux pas of the authors the original text speaks of "irrational motives". Cf. also Halfmann & Japp (1993: 428f).

[57] Neither Klandermans & Tarrow (1988) nor Neidhardt & Rucht (1991) refer to this paradigm in their review articles.

[58] Lash & Urry (1984: 31) even call the paradigm "game-theoretic Marxism."

[59] The orthodox Marxist school is primarily focused on the reconciliation of any movement cleavages with "Marxist" classes. A collection of essays by orthodox Marxists on the new social movements (Haug & Elfferding 1982) consequently deals only with the women's movement, whose beneficiaries best could be treated as economically deprived class.

[60] Otherwise they would have been excluded from this discussion on epistemological grounds.

[61] If Analytical Marxists can thus still be called "Marxists" is highly debatable (Hindess 1986: 440).

What is left as substantial qualification of rational choice accounts is the introduction of social norms, which render accounts of the emergence of collective action more plausible.[62] However, the empirical falsifiability of such accounts hinges on the capability to determine the distortion of norms within a given population, a condition that is difficult to meet (Elster 1991b: 116-118), some Analytical Marxists believe that there will never be a universal theory of collective action (Elster 1989: 205). Even if we were able to construct reasonable *a priori* assumptions about the distribution of norms, the problem that social norms in rational choice theories are (almost always) relegated to the sphere of the individual would still remain (Eder & Schmidtke 1998: 424). In general, analytical Marxism is surprisingly silent on the role of social institutions. This a problem has been more convincingly addressed in resource mobilization theory.

Strands of Resource Mobilization Theory

> "Mobilization is the process by which a group secures collective control over the resources needed for collective action. The major issues, therefore, are the resources controlled by the group prior to mobilization efforts, the processes by which the group pools the resources and direct these towards social change, and the extent to which outsiders increase [and/or restrict] the pool of resources." (Jenkins 1983: 532f)

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[62] Jon Elster suggests the introduction of these ideal types for potential participants of collective action:
1) pure outcome-oriented *egoists*, whose dominant strategy is free riding;
2) *everyday Kantians*, whose dominant strategy is cooperation, if and only if universal cooperation is more desirable than universal defection (Elster 1989: 192; Elster [1990] 1991: 56);
3) *utilitarians*, that are outcome-oriented and participate in collective action, if their participation would raise the average profit of all group members (Elster 1989: 48; Elster [1990] 1991: 57);
4) *participationists*, namely (a) elite participationists, that would like to be the avantgarde of new ideas and thus cooperate at a low participation level, and (b) mass participationists, that enjoy crowds and thus cooperate at a high participation level (Elster 1989: 203f);
5) individuals that have internalized the *fair play rule*, i.e., cooperate, if the majority of potential participants cooperates (Elster 1989: 187; Elster [1990] 1991: 56f).

If now a group contains some everyday Kantians, these individuals might initialize a small amount of collective action, which triggers avantgarde participation. In turn this might enlarge the collective action group to the brink of increasing marginal utility of additional participants, hence utilitarians would enter the group, which in turn would motivate "fair play" adherents to participate, finally mass participants would join the group of activists, while their elite counterparts and utilitarians drop out.

To call resource mobilization theory the dominant movement paradigm in the US of the last two decades is probably an understatement.[63] The literature within this paradigm has become so proliferate that it seems sensible to distinguish between the two more homogenous strands of *resource mobilization proper* and the *political process model* (McAdam 1988: 126; Marx & McAdam 1994: 80-86).

Resource Mobilization Proper

Formal organizations and internal resources have been the key variables for the explanation of social movements in early resource mobilization accounts (Cohen 1985: 677).

Starting from Olson's by-product theory, traditional resource mobilization theory has considered strong, bureaucratically structured *social movement organizations* (McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987: 20) indispensable for successful mobilizations. Social movement organizations are distinct from the "organization" of social movements in Tilly's (1978: 62f) sense. The latter consists of a *social movement industry* (McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987: 21), which contains several formal organizations and more informal groups and network ties.

Social movement organizations

- are critical for the distribution of selective incentives,
- deliver crucial communication channels between movement members (McAdam 1988: 143ff),
- ensure the continuity of a movement (Bader 1991: 239; Koopmans 1993: 641.),
- can serve as a symbol of a movement thereby strengthening the collective identity of the group and articulating movement goals to a wider audience (Bader 1991: 228f),
- can attract resourceful members to the movement offering career opportunities for political entrepreneurs (McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987: 27, 37; Oliver & Marwell 1992: 268f; Zald & McCarthy [1975] 1987: 109).[64]
- increase the efficacy of the movement (Gamson 1975b: 93; Tarrow 1989: 76-79).[65]

While social movement organizations are crucial for the success of a movement, their creation requires a large resource pool.

Resources are second to organization only in the resource mobilization approach. Nevertheless, the resource concept has remained fairly ambiguous (Cress & Snow 1996: 1090; Soule et al. 1999: 240f). One of the rare attempts to elaborate the concept is Cress and

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[63] Some scholars even think resource mobilization's offspring political process theory has become hegemonic (Goodwin & Jasper 1999: 28)

[64] Cf. For drawbacks of this proposition during the initial phase of a movement cf. Oliver (1984: 601).

[65] However, see Goldstone in Gamson (1990: 222) and Piven & Cloward (1977: 222) for problems regarding the findings for this hypothesis.

Snow's (1996: 1094) typology that distinguishes between *moral*, *material*, *informational*, and *human* resources. This typology overlaps roughly with Bourdieu's categories of *symbolic*, *economic*, *cultural* and *social capital*, respectively. Since Bourdieu's typology is better known and emphasizes the temporal dimension of capital, it will be used here.

Initial formulations of resource mobilization theory understood almost exclusively economic capital under the resource label. Even this form of capital is very heterogeneous, as it encompasses *monetary resources*, *labor* and *physical assets*, which differ sharply in portability and substitutability. Social movement organizations obviously require material resources (Piven & Cloward 1992: 317). Offices are to be bought or rented; travel costs arise; movement pamphlets require printing facilities. The most effective mobilization strategies such as direct mail and telemarketing require particularly large monetary resources (Oliver & Marwell 1992: 261). Selective incentives equally require resources, although incentives play a much smaller role in contemporary mobilizations than Olson predicted (Gamson 1975b: 124f).

The grouping of capital other than economic capital into the resource category risks the dilution of the resource concept to a catch-all phrase. Probably the least problematic inclusion concerns *cultural capital*.

> "Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the *embodied* state, i.e. in the form of long-lasting dispositions in the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.; and in its *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because […] it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee." (Bourdieu 1983: 243)

Cultural capital effects mobilization processes directly and indirectly. Persons controlling high amounts of institutionalized cultural capital usually estimate their efficacy higher than less resourceful individuals (Paulsen 1991: 100,106). They are also more open to consider action lines that lie outside the established institutional and normative framework (Gamson [1975] 1990: 166; Piven & Cloward 1977: 6, 13). Embodied cultural capital is important for the construction of "condensing symbols." These symbols can be linguistic or visual signs, but might as well (partly) consist of collective actions or even charismatic leaders. With their help the movement can trigger media attention and thereby improve its communicative record (Neidhardt & Rucht 1993: 319), but also construct its collective identity. Cultural capital is less suited for the resource concept, because value of cultural capital is environment

depended (Wuthnow & Lawson 1994: 37). For instance, objectified cultural capital in the form of swastika flags was of positive value in the polity of the Third Reich, but would have been of negative value in US-American polity. Likewise, fundamentalist Christians' appeals to gospels in legitimization of their claims is of value on to devout Christians. Indeed, most of New Age's embodied cultural capital is of little value outside the movement. Some forms of cultural capital, in particular of the institutionalized kind such as academic degrees conferred by Ivy league schools, are however valuable in almost all contexts. It is that kind of cultural capital that can meaningfully be modeled as a resource.

Entirely unsuited to be modeled as a resource is social capital, i.e.

> "the aggregate of the actual and potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of acquaintance and mutual recognition — or in other words membership in a group." (Bourdieu 1983: 248)

Its rootedness in network structure means that social capital unlike resources is not an individual level variable, even if individuals can access it as if it were a resource. It thus is misleading to frame social capital a resource.

At the intersection of cultural and social capital we find symbolic capital, i.e. labor that enables the reproduction of existing relationships (Bourdieu [1972] 1979: 335). Symbolic capital lacks an essential characteristic of capital, namely it is not scarce (Eder & Schmidtke 1998: 422), which renders economic analysis difficult, if not infeasible. Consequently, neither social nor symbolic capital will be dubbed a resource here. Instead, social capital will be analyzed as network structure, while categories such as *cultural resonances* and *empirical credibility* will replace the concept of symbolic capital.

Political Process Model

For later "resource mobilization" theorists the above model has become too static and too focused on formal organizations while neglecting network and political opportunity structures. The *political process model* alleviates these weaknesses.

Regarding the organization of a movement, political process theory focuses more on informal networks. It has been shown that due to the absence of formal organizations emergent movements almost exclusively recruit members through informal network ties, and even at later stages networks are by far the most efficient mobilization vehicles (Bearman 1993; Bearman & Everett 1993; Diani 1995; Diani & Lodi 1988: 115; Donati 1984: 843;

Fantasia 1988; Friedman & McAdam 1992: 158; Gould 1993: 191ff; Jasper & Poulsen 1995: 494f; Jenkins 1983: 535; Kim & Bearman 1997: 74; Kriesi 1988a: 48, 53f; Marwell & Oliver 1993; McAdam 1982; McAdam 1986; McAdam 1988: 144-146; McAdam 1994: 43; McAdam & Poulsen 1993; McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987: 20f; Snow & Oliver 1995: 574; Strang & Soule 1998: 268).

With respect to resources, it has been shown that not only internal assets influence movement viability, but opportunities to mobilize resources outside the movement also decide about a movement's fate. The better a movement "fits" its institutional environment, the better are its chances for success. The most important elements of the political opportunity structure are state, countermovements and mass media.

The state specializes in the control of collective action and is therefore of unique importance for collective actors. Among other things, states might use their police or military to control protest; they can hire spies and informants and thereby directly affect the internal dynamics of a movement (Balser 1997: 219; Marx 1979); they can (de-)legitimize movement goals and means through legal action (Tilly 1978: 101). Contrary to common sense, it is not the most open polities that are suited best for the emergence of social movements, since states of this type preempt non-institutional collective phenomena usually through their incorporation into the polity (Eyerman & Jamison 1991b: 249f; Opp 1991: 217; Tarrow 1991: 652).[66] Equally important is the configuration of state elites, since only the case of elite friction it is possible "to compel concessions from elites that can be used as resources to sustain oppositional organizations over time" (Piven & Cloward 1977: xxi; see also Neidhardt & Rucht 1993: 310; Oberschall 1979: 66). Factionalism among elites might also encourage part of them to engage themselves as political entrepreneurs (Kornhauser [1959] 1960; Tarrow 1991: 652).

The influence of mass media on movement mobilizations can also hardly be underestimated (Gamson [1975] 1990: 147; Eder 1993: 56f; Marx 1979: 96f; Molotch 1979: 77; Schmitt-Beck 1990: 642). Mass media can

  – articulate movement goals to a wider public and hence help recruiting new members,
  – enhance communication among movement members augmenting internal resources,
  – strengthen the collective identity of the movement,

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[66] A more formal rational choice explanation of the curvilinear relationship between state openness and collective action is offered by Analytical Marxists Barbalet (1991: 457); Elster (1989: 33).

- increase its perception as a legitimate actor decreasing the likelihood of repression (Gamson [1975] 1990: 160, 169; Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 3; McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987: 30; Molotch 1979: 82, 89; Schmitt-Beck 1990: 650).

Movement media, on the other hand, have a much lower diffusion range, but hold an advantage in the internal shaping of the movement identity (Beywl 1989: 12f; Donati 1984: 854; Stamm 1989: 8).

Mass media and the state naturally also shape the development of movements opposed to the social movement in question (Zald & Useem 1987: 256f). Countermovements might on the one hand reduce the resources basis of the "pro-movement," (Koopmans & Duyvendak 1991: 17) but equally might serve to strengthen the collective identity of the latter (Callero 1992: 486f).

Movements not opposed to the goals of the movement in question likewise can both reduce or augment its viability, as they might compete for its recruitment pool or serve as allies in the struggle against the polity (Klandermans 1990: 26; Kriesi 1988a: 42).

Some authors propose to introduce international or supranational political opportunity structures as separate variable (e.g., Jenkins 1995: 33; Kriesi 1995: 193, 196; Tarrow [1998] 1999: 176ff). While cross-country communication has definitely increased tremendously over the last decades, and international organizations increasingly affect social movement development (Brand 1985b: 330; Gamson 1988: 235; Leggewie 1985: 124),[67] these trends need not be framed as a separate variable, but instead can be conceptualized within the variables of institutional setting and media discourses, though.

The introduction of interaction effects between movements and their environments and the emphasis on network ties has made the resource mobilization perspective already considerably more dynamic. Some theorists still want to go further and introduce "movement cycles" as an additional temporal component. These scholars contend that most social movements undergo similar changes over time. The novel action repertoire of successful new movements gains legitimacy over time (Klandermans & Tarrow 1988: 9; Walker, Rogers & Zelditch 1988: 225). When social movement organizations can recur to a newly developed action repertoire and emerging frames, they might profit from a partial opening of the polity, the social movement proliferates (Tarrow 1989: 84). Finally the movement becomes

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[67] Cf. Van der Heijden, Koopmans & Giugni (1992: 5) for some empirical findings that illustrate this hypothesis. Skeptical on cross country impacts remains Tarrow (1991: 661).

institutionalized, which in turn paves way for mobilizations demanding more radical objectives (Tarrow 1989: 46ff; more cautiously: Rucht, Blatter & Rink 1997).[68] It is, however, unclear, if all movements undergo these phases. New Age, for example, is by now a quarter of a century old and still has made no inroad into political institutions. Therefore, protest cycle theory will be ignored here.

Critique

Except for the suspension of protest cycle theory, few criticisms have been raised against resource mobilization theories until now. This silent approval is rooted in the fact that most propositions within this school do make sense and have withstood empirical testing. That does not imply that there are no problems with many specific hypotheses, though. In particular, the rationality assumption, surely a rich source for empirically falsifiable hypothesis (R.Turner 1991: 90), needs serious qualifications, as it has been empirically refuted in its pure form. After all, given positive attitudes towards a movement, strong, a f f e c t u a l ties have proven to predict recruitment best (Diani & Lodi 1988: 115; Erickson Nepstad & Smith 1999: 32f; Klandermans 1990: 125; McAdam 1988). Nor has the research praxis within the paradigm kept pace with its theoretical development. Most likely because of the more facile methodological grip on formal organizations, for long network theses had long been neglected in empirical research (Dalton, Kuechler & Bürklin 1990: 9; Diani 1992a: 107; Kitschelt 1991: 334-337; Piven & Cloward 1992: 302), but over the last years major empirical works have been published in this field (Bearman 1993; Diani 1995). Recently, the political opportunity structure concept has also become under attack. The wide variety of phenomena that characterize the concept hint at the danger that political opportunity structure, just like selective incentives and resources, will become a catch-all phrase (Gamson & Meyer 1996: 275; Goodwin & Jasper 1999: 31; Tarrow [1998] 1999: 19). At the same time, there is also the danger to forget that political opportunities are not objective facts but institutional arrangements that rely heavily on social construction

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[68] Friberg (1988: 41ff) suggests even longer lasting protest waves. He has examined the allegedly positive impact of the success of the Protestantism, democracy, labor, and old women's movements on the mobilizations of the new social movements. Unfortunately, he does not present a theory of collective memory, though. He also does not discuss the problematique that his units of analysis, i.e., contemporary nation states, did not exist in 16th and 18th century, when Protestantism and democracy movements respectively mobilized. In addition his predictions cannot easily be reconciled with empirical reality: Germany should experience one of the lowest new social movements, Finland one of the highest mobilization rates, both projections fail (Roth & Rucht 1987: 11; Paastela 1987: 19).

processes (Gamson & Meyer 1996; Polletta 1999). However, a nuanced application of the concept does not only prevent such potential pitfalls (Meyer 1999), most political process accounts actually do practice such care (Tilly 1999b).[69]

The explanations in resource mobilization theories are thus usually sound. However, they are incomplete, as they decidedly do not attempt to explain several important aspects of social movements. Like most rational choice theories, resource mobilization theory usually treats individual and group preferences exogenously. This separate treatment of structure and action, is however problematic. "Since meanings are produced in the course of interaction with other individuals and objects of attention, it strikes as foolheartly to take meaning and other ideational elements for granted." (Snow & Benford 1988: 198)[70] What is more, individual rational action can only take place on the basis of previously in interaction with the environment negotiated classification schemes (Bourdieu [1979] 1992: 730; Miller 1994: 13).

Identity

The *identity* paradigm fills parts of the above theory gap. Hypotheses of this perspective can be grouped around two themes. An earlier strand of the identity paradigm, *new social movement theory*, views recent macrostructural changes as primary factors in the genesis of the new social movements. Later *constructionist* explanations of collective identity moved to the center of attention.[71] The following sections will examine these theoretical strands.

New Social Movement Theories

New social movement theory considers various elements of the new social movements qualitatively new phenomena. In at least four areas the new movements have allegedly charted new territory. These areas are values, action forms, classes, and risks. As discussed

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[69] To be sure, one of the leading protagonists of the political process model defines political opportunity structure rather vaguely, when he writes:

"By political opportunities, I mean consistent — but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national — dimensions of the political struggle that encourages people to engage in contentious politics. By political constraints, I mean factors — like repression, but also like authorities' capacity to present a solid front to insurgents — that discourage contention." (Tarrow [1998] 1999: 19f).

But Tarrow's "book does not quibble about definitions as it ranges over 200 years of history and the entire planet in its unbelievably rich and varied concrete applications" (Gamson 1999: 337).

[70] Cf. also Snow et al. (1986: 466).

[71] In the distinction between new social movements theory "proper" and the constructionist approach I follow Bartholomew & Mayer (1992: 143) and Klandermans (1991: 30).

above,[72] these variables do not suffice to establish an novel type of movement. Can they nevertheless serve as explanatory variables?

The most enduring (Nevitte, Bakwis & Gibbins 1989: 483) theory that would answer the latter question affirmatively is Ronald Inglehart's thesis that a value shift in advanced industrialized society has triggered a *silent revolution*, in whose wake the new social movements emerged.

New Values

The culture shift Inglehart and his collaborators posit consists is described through three hypotheses:

(1) Most persons acquire fairly stable value orientations during childhood and early adolescence.

(2) Individuals embrace those values that are suitable to attain those goods and services that characterize the lowest stage in Maslow's value hierarchy not satisfied during adolescence.

(3) Contemporary values lie on a postmaterialism/materialism axis.

According to Inglehart, individuals adopt values their *formative years*[73] and only rarely change these afterwards. The actual environment of individuals influences their value system slightly, but this effect is minor when compared to the socialization effect (Inglehart 1990: 82). Important for the predominant values of a generation, hence, are the circumstances its members encountered during adolescence.

The economic theory of decreasing marginal utilities tells us then that those (material and symbolic) goods lacking during the formative years of a person become highly valued. In combination with Maslow's need hierarchy,[74] it follows that persons growing up in material security become "postmaterialists" primarily concerned with the values of self-realization (Inglehart 1990: 133f). The prospering post-WW2 years thus have bred a predominantly postmaterialist generation (Inglehart 1990: 162f, 316).

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[72] See section 0.

[73] Inglehart unfortunately does not give any precise time span.

[74] In the reading of Inglehart (1990: 130), Maslow contends that there are four hierarchically ordered need levels. Needs on a higher level become only activated, when those on lower levels have been satisfied to some extent. The lowest level comprises the "physiological needs" such as drinking and sex. Next are the "security needs," that refer to safety and order concerns. They are followed by needs for love, community, self respect. Finally, on the highest level "self-realization" needs consisting of aesthetic, intellectual and emancipatory needs arise.

Although this is a parsimonious and intuitively convincing theory, theoretical and methodological criticism casts serious doubts on its validity, as all three central hypothesis have become under attack.

The incorporation of Maslow's need hierarchy is probably its weakest point.

> "[Maslow's] model violates core theoretical assumptions widely accepted in social science. It ignores the social constitution of 'individuals;' it disregards the different system references of needs and values; it neglects processes of systemic differentiation, which change norms and values and alter the modi of their functioning and references; it overlooks the dynamics of social movements and communicative processes, which transport frames partly independently from their genesis."(Thome 1985: 32, translation mine)[75]

In short, it is untenable. A rescue of Inglehart's remaining theory would require at least an incorporation of political socialization effects (Gehmacher 1987: 78). Alternatively, Inglehart's ontogenesis of values could be discarded altogether and replaced by the accounts proposed by Jürgen Habermas or Scott Flanagan and Wilhelm Bürklin.[76]

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[75] Cf. also Herz (1987: 57).

[76] While Habermas shares Inglehart's conceptualization of the postmaterialist values, he proposes a radically different ontogenesis, which necessarily also arrives a different constituency of the collective actors advocating postmaterialist values.

Habermas (1981b: 275ff) proposes that the two central subsystems of society, economy and politics, acquired an autonomy decoupled from the everyday lifeworld of the individual. This autonomy made possible the intrusion of the subsystems into the "grammar of life forms"(Habermas [1981] 1995b: 576): A growing number of individuals can no longer accommodate their life worlds without recurrence to the system media money and power; social relations become subdued to the logic of the market and simultaneously acquire a legal character, they become "*verrechtlicht*." These developments endanger the communicatively integrated life worlds.

This colonization process is felt strongest in those groups which do not directly participate in the (market dominated) production process, since this peripheral groups do not have a direct interest in capitalist growth and the social institutions, which enhance the latter. (Habermas [1981] 1995b: 577) But within the periphery there are different reactions: both apathy and protest are possible. Protest, though, can only occur in those groups that can attribute the colonization. In complex societies these will be those individuals that have sufficient knowledge and abstraction capabilities. Acceptance of "postmaterialist" movements is hence dependent the political socialization of an individual through family and peer groups, rather than on formative material security. On the macro level, thus, not economic prosperity, but the education expansion triggers the rise of postmaterialist values. The constituency of New Religious and new social movements consequently does not consist of the younger generation, but primarily of students enjoying a prolonged adolescence phase and resulting cognitive resources.

Habermas (1981b: 577ff) calls also the one-dimensionality of the postmaterialism concept into question. This critique has been much more elaborated in the theory of functional value change, though.

Scott Flanagan (1987) and Wilhelm Bürklin (1994) are the most outspoken proponents of this alternative to Inglehart's silent revolution. For them the vanishing of social constraints is the most salient factor in the rise of the new values. Modern techniques and the welfare state enabled a formerly unknown independence of the individual from nature. In concert with urbanization resulting in the reduction of social control the rise of new, hedonistic values was made feasible.

However, even these more plausible accounts do not answer the question, whether adults really rarely change their value. Although the empirical research seems to support this proposition (Inglehart 1990; De Graaf, Hagenaars & Luijkx 1989),[77] several methodological flaws in these studies limit the credibility of their results severely.

Two alternatives to Inglehart's socialization hypothesis operationalized by cohort effects of the data exist.[78] For one, the current historical environment might influence current prevailing values. The existence of period effects in the data would support the latter thesis. It could also be that individuals hold different values at different stages of their lives,[79] which would translate into life cycle effects. At this point methodological difficulties arise. Period effects are relatively easy to isolate, but to distinguish between generational and life cycle effects on the basis of Inglehart's aggregate data is a difficult enterprise and the supporters of Inglehart's theory have failed to convincingly separate these two effects.[80]

In addition the cognitive mobilization of large parts of the populace has taken place: Via the education expansion *homo oeconomicus* replaces the emotional and traditional actor.

The third element of the functional culture shift is a dissolution of the traditional value communities, i.e., labor movement and church religions, in the absence of contemporary functional equivalents. A pluralization of life styles has taken place, that allows the individual to strife for hedonistic goals.

[77] To be sure, there is a slight period effect in Inglehart's four-item-index, which though is probably attributable to the incorporation of the item "fight rising prices" that is sensitive to the actual inflation rate.

[78] An operationalization of the generational effect dividing the sample along generational lines, rather than into equidistant cohorts would have been theoretically more adequate but methodologically more ambitious.

[79] Such a hypothesis could be rooted in Habermas' (1981b: 577) thesis of the colonization of life worlds that has the strongest impact on persons not directly participating in the production process. Those persons are overrepresented in younger (15-30 years old) and older age groups(over 60 years old). Since students usually enjoy a prolonged adolescence phase, an interaction effect with a formal education variable would also be expected in this vain.

[80] At first sight the sharp increase in the percentage of postmaterialist in the first postwar cohort in comparison to the WW2 cohort seems to support Inglehart's theory. However, to show the temporal stability of this differential, Inglehart computes the correlation between the share of postmaterialists across different time periods within panel studies. He reports that this correlation is only moderately high between T_1 and T_2 as well as T_2 and T_3, i.e., $r_{12} \approx r_{23}$, but the correlation r_{13} remains on the same level. Yet, in Markov chains, which correspond to the life cycle model, this correlation would have been expected much lower, namely at $r_{13} = r_{12} \times r_{23} < r_{12} = r_{23}$, since $r_{12} \wedge r_{23} \in]0;1[$ (Inglehart 1990: 106ff). Inglehart's LISREL analysis then indeed arrives at high stability coefficients. Unfortunately, however LISREL estimates stability from the ratio of the diachronic correlation r_c of an index and its synchron counterpart r_a. It is not difficult to see that ceteris paribus this leads to high stability coefficients, if $e(r_a)$, i.e., the reliability of an index, is very small (Jagodzinski 1984). Inglehart's (1990: 123f) rebuttal of this critique is less than convincing. He asserts that LISREL lists significance measures that would distinguish between "significant and meaningless" results. For one, "statistical theory alone does not provide firm guidelines for accepting H_0; acceptance must be based also on an extrastatistical judgment." (e.g., Wonnacott & Wonnacott [1979: 89]) Statistical inference always rests on the correct selection of a model (family). Secondly, the significance measures Inglehart presents test the significance of the results against the hypothesis that the socialization model does not improve prediction over random prediction. Since life cycle and generational model are not completely independent over a period of seven years, i.e., Inglehart's time

Despite these problems, the most serious objection to Inglehart's thesis remains that the one-dimensionality of the materialism/postmaterialism axis is a methodological artifact.[81] At least two methodological pitfalls in Inglehart's affirmation of one-dimensionality exist. The farthest objection to his methodology is that the scale quality of Inglehart's data does not allow for a factor analysis.[82] His data, obtained through mandatory ordering of items, represent an ordinal scale, while strictly speaking the application of factor analysis requires data on an interval scale. However, social science data rarely achieve this property, and, hence it has become customary to treat this restriction leniently (Blalock 1982: 54; Schnell, Hill & Esser 1989: 140-144). However, Inglehart's data are not only ordinally scaled, but also meet the criterion for ipsativity,[83] which suggests that Inglehart obtained one-dimensional data through an ipsative transformation of a multidimensional space,[84] whose

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frame, the same significance niveau might as well be achieved through a life cycle model. A rejection of the life cycle hypothesis seems therefore premature.

Habermas' life cycle proposition also stands on shaky ground, since the 1896/1905 cohort, which during the entire panel study had already left the production process, contest the smallest proportion of postmaterialists (Inglehart 1990: Table 2-3, 2-4, pp.91,93). These data also undermine Inglehart's socialization hypothesis, since those cohort members grew up in times of higher stability and security than their 1906/15 successors spending childhood during World War I and adolescence during the economic crises of the 1920ies.

[81] Theoretical alternatives to Inglehart's concept have been proposed by Habermas, who distinguishes within the new movements between retreat (*Rückzug*) potential and emancipatory mobilizations (Habermas [1981] 1995b: 577f), and Flanagan, who suggests the introduction of a two dimensional plane with one libertarian/authoritarian and another materialist/non-materialist dimension (Flanagan 1987)..

[82] This objection applies foremost to factor analysis of the R-type, the one Inglehart allegedly applies. The alternative Q-technique apples to samples containing a large array of variables and a relatively small number of cases (Guilford 1954).

[83] In ipsative vectors the sum of the row entries equals a constant.

[84] An ipsative transformation projects the vectors in v in body Ψ onto an ipsative vector w (*supra nota* 83) in space W, whereby dim (Ψ)= dim (W)+1. Hence, one dimension gets lost, the projection constitutes a homomorphism (Schnell, Hill & Esser 1989: 134).

Hence, ipsative transformations project two (or more) factors onto a single one, which nevertheless obtains a substantial eigenvalue. Preference data always entail the attribute of ipsativity, since their row entries — i.e., the sum of n preference numbers 1, 2,…, n — equals a constant, namely $\frac{1}{2}n^2 + \frac{1}{2}n$ (Guilford 1954: 277). Such data are suited for factor analysis only, if the model that the sum of all item values equals a constant would be plausible. With respect to the postmaterialism index this would mean that across all interviewees the desire for all goals mentioned in the index together would be both invariable and across the items equidistantly distributed. Otherwise the data obtained are not only too low, but also d i f f e r e n t l y scaled. Obviously the former assumption sounds absurd and Inglehart indeed does not establish it explicitly. What is more, he remains insensitive to the problems generated by ipsativity of his data, although the article that elaborates the criticism made here (Jackson & Alwin 1980) can be found in Inglehart's (1990) bibliography. In a rebuttal of Flanagan's two-dimensional value space, Inglehart argues:

"Rankings, [Flanagan] argues, somehow force all the items into a single Materialist/Postmaterialist factor. It is difficult to see how rankings could do that, but we need not to wonder [sic!]- Flanagan's hypothesis has already been tested in two Western countries — and the results contradict his expectations." (Inglehart 1990: 142)

dimensionality already has been severely restricted through its low degrees of freedom.[85] In sum, since apparently two decades of extensive research on the new values did not lead to unequivocal results, it seems reasonable to ignore theories that focus on values and norms.

New Organization and Action Forms

The empirical basis of thesis that new social movement organization are historically peculiar is likewise tenuous. Unlike today's traditional movements, the new social movements and parts of the new religious movements have consciously adopted a decentral segmented organizational form (Brand 1987: 34; Kriesi 1988a: 45; Watts 1987: 47). While this might constitute a reasonably adequate description of many of the new movements, it is difficult to see why this observation should contain any analytical value by itself. Viewed through the lens of resource mobilization theory, one might point out the efficacy effects of centralized organizations (Klandermans & Tarrow 1988: 21), or show the advantages of federal associations (Olson 1965: 61f), or one might in accordance with the constructionist paradigm conclude that the organization form is not only a mobilization vehicle but also simultaneously a condensing symbol of the movement (Kitschelt 1991: 337; Marx Ferree 1992: 39),[86] but the fluidity of the movement organization neither is a distinct feature of contemporary movements nor can it unmediatedly serve as explanation tool.

The same objection applies analogously to the newness of the action forms. Consider the following action and organization repertoire of social movements of the 19th century:

  – relatively autonomous action forms;
  – frequently several formal organizations;
  – direct challenges to authorities;
  – mass rallies;
  – distribution of common programs, slogans, symbols;
  – preference for actions that generate high public visibility.[87]

Obviously, this might as well be a list that refers to the new social movements.[88]

This quotation affirms two suspicions at once. It can neither be ruled out that Inglehart's results are methodologically flawed, nor has the two-dimensional value space Flanagan favors been empirically refuted.

[85] The four-item-index entails 3 the 12 (3×4)-item-index 9 degrees of freedom.

[86] This might also explain, why those movements consciously adopted this organizational form (cf. Dalton/Kuechler/Bürklin [1990: 16]; Rucht [1990: 159], who propose that this is qualitatively new dimension).

[87] Adopted from Tilly (1986: 173f).

New Risks

When it comes to the "new" goals of the new social movements, the diagnosis of theoretical paucity of the new social movement paradigm does not change either. Consider the probably most sophisticated notion of contemporary risks as movement targets:

> "The risks that appear under the most developed production circumstances — I am thinking here primarily of radioactivity inaccessible to human senses without measurement tools, but I also keep long-term poisonous substances in air, water and food in mind — differ sharply from assets. These risks produce system-endemic and frequently long-term damages; they remain frequently invisible; they originate in causal interpretations and therefore develop only through (scientific or anti-scientific) knowledge; and they can be changed, diminished or aggravated through knowledge and thus are wide open for social definition attempts." (Beck 1986: 29f, translation mine)

Without ignoring two centuries of ideological struggle between a variety of Marxist and liberalist worldviews, it is difficult to see, in which sense the "new" movements face a "more open" conceptional terrain than their "old" counterparts did at their inception (Calhoun 1993).[89] Surely, "'old' social movements […] developed comparatively clear-cut visions of how to improve collective life chances," (Halfmann & Japp 1993: 435) but this has been a (still ongoing) long process.

New Classes

Finally there is the position that in late industrial society "new middle classes" emerge. In its simplest form, this emergence translates more or less directly into "new" class action. A for present purposes more useful thesis is, that the members of the petty bourgeoisie trapped inbetween grand bourgeoisie and proletariat lose their self-identity and thus engage in a "collective therapeutic discourse" to reclaim individual identities (Eder 1986: 344f). However, the class approach entails problems discussed later, and the quest for identity is conceptualized in more detail by the constructionist approach to be discussed next.

In sum, the "new" phenomena new social movements theorists have identified do not warrant a separate analysis of either new social or new religious movements. This does not mean a complete rejection of all aspects of the new social movement paradigm, though. New social movements theorists do have raised attention to important features of the "new"

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[88] Tarrow (1989: 65) stipulates a similar opinion.

[89] Offe & Wiesenthal (1980) more specifically even elaborate that the different collective actors faced differential difficulties in their definition of common interests.

movements. In particular the risk category does sensitize for the social construction of grievances and collective identities, which, however, do not constitute peculiarities of the "new" movements, but allegedly are vital for any emerging collective actor. The most fruitful strand of new social movement theory then has been the constructionist approach. Let me briefly outline its central thesis.

Constructionism

In line with the critics of resource mobilization theory, but likewise directed at new social movement theory, constructionists assert that the assumption of a unified actor is problematic and must be scrutinized.[90] Most work done within this paradigm consequently is directed at the development of a fruitful concept of collective identity. These efforts will be discussed in the following chapter. Let me here only discuss, why collective identity occupies such a central position within constructionism.

Unlike some new social movements theorists, which treat ideological goals at face value, constructionists explore additional functions of these goals. If one considers the modernization process a "dislocation of individuals from their traditional *milieux* in the sense of traditional power and dependency contexts [… in conjunction with] a loss of taken for granted certainties about knowledge, beliefs and social norms," (Beck 1986: 206, translation mine) one might claim that movement identities ameliorate this situation by enabling individuals the redefinition of their symbolic relationships (Sassoon 1984: 871). The highly particular social relations typical for contemporary society, do not provide the individual with a sufficient amount of communicative interaction and social valuation (Kriesi 1988b: 356; Melucci 1989: 89; Touraine 1985: 769). "A shared idea on the contrary promises a shelter, a communitarian ideological brotherhood, fraternity of fate and mission." (Bauman 1991: 245)

What appears in new social movement theory proper as implementation of postmaterialist values by people with high social, high cultural and somewhat less economic capital, can be reinterpreted as the identity seeking process of the petty bourgeoisie (Eder 1985: 879). But not only the petty bourgeoisie suffers from a lack of identity, it is only the group most exposed to vanishing of the old reference points, family, work and nation (Melucci 1989: 108f; Neidhardt & Rucht 1993: 312). To be sure, "nation" did acquire over the last two

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[90] Cf. Melucci (1980: 200f, 213; 1984: 823f; 1988: 331; 1989: 20) with respect to resource mobilization theory; Melucci (1989: 42-44, 195) with respect to the new social movement approach.

centuries and even very recently a renaissance as identity marker. But the contemporary neo-tribalism does not indicate re-emerging "tribes." Neo-tribes do not reflect an inherent increase of the significance of ethnicity or nationality, but on the contrary refer to "contrafactual" and frequently changing communities (Bonß 1993: 146). The original tribes of antiquity and the medieval nations were relatively tightly controlled and their membership was through family ties ascriptively defined. In contrast, membership in neo-tribes is based on personal decisions and frequently of short duration (Bauman 1991: 248ff; Bauman 1993; Melucci 1989: 73). Social control has become difficult, since the members do not know each other (Anderson 1983: 40), even though neo-tribes are of high relevance for their members. In sum, one might allege that social movements serve at least inter alia the enlargement of their member's identities (Gamson 1992a: 56). This possibility complicates the role of different collective action forms: They might not only exist to further the explicit goals of a movement, but might instead serve to develop these common goals in the first place (Japp 1984: 324; Melucci 1989: 60, 74; Sassoon 1984: 869).

Political Process à la Constructionism

Obviously constructionism and resource mobilization theory are less competing than compatible paradigms. While resource mobilization theory explains how social movements mobilize, constructionists attempt to clarify why they do so (Melucci 1980: 212; Melucci 1984: 821; Melucci 1985: 792). But, a combination of both theory strands is not as facile as it may seem at first glance. Most theorists sensitive to both structural and cognitive issues, suggest that for resource mobilization theory collective identity — or for that matter all cultural and cognitive phenomena — is an intervening variable, while constructionist treats identity as dependent variable (Snow & Oliver 1995: 583; Zald 1991: 350f).[91] But even that conception overestimates the complexity of resource mobilization theory accounts. In most cases resource mobilization theory explicitly ignores the role of culture, but implicitly reduces the latter to the rational actor within the political system (Benford 1987: 9; Kitschelt 1991: 324f; Melucci 1984: 828; Melucci 1985: 798; Melucci 1989: 186, 194f; Snow & Benford 1988: 198). Constructionism is equally overvalued, as it attempts to explain, what collective identity is and which function it serves, rather than how it is constructed. "Seldom is specified what, socially, [collective identity] is constructed of, far less who does the

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[91] Eder (1993: 1) without referring to the different paradigms does likewise.

constructing or how, when and why" (MacKinnon 1994: 261),[92] although it is clear that political and social opportunity structures limit the construction of identities severely (Eder 1995a: 33). In other words, there is no or only a rudimentary set of independent variables in most constructionist accounts.[93] This is the point, where resource mobilization theory should step in, since it does offer a comparably elaborate explanatory apparatus. However, collective identity is not adequately modeled as intervening variable of collective action, since it both necessarily precedes collective action, and is subsequently conditioned by it. Hence, it seems more parsimonious to model collective identity as an aspect of collective action, which, however for analytical purposes can be distinguished from collective action "proper".[94] Since collective action has a close relation to collective identity, it seems reasonable to assume that theories that explain collective action can at least partially also explain collective identity. This is the reason, why I selected resource mobilization theory so to speak as a baseline model in the explanation of collective identity.

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[92] MacKinnon refers to sexual identities, but the same situation exists with respect to other collective identities. Unfortunately, the author herself does not contribute too much on this question either, since she treats gender identities in a quasi-primordialist traditionalist fashion.

[93] To be sure, there are notable exceptions (Benford 1987; Eyerman & Jamison 1991a; Gamson 1988; Gamson 1992b; Gamson & Modigliani 1989; Snow et al. 1986).

[94] Melucci (1995: 53) proceeds likewise, but has very different additional aspects ("dimensions" in his terminology) in mind.

3 THEORY: THE MODEL

Within the framework described in the preceding chapter, let me now develop a model for the analysis of New Age.

Overview

Figure 3-1 visualizes the main model. Before surveying its main variables and the relationships among them, an important property of the model shall be emphasized. Namely, the model is recursive, while empirical reality is not. Although it would have been desirable to include feedback effects and a processual view of collective identity, this model is more readily intelligible and is thus better suited for the initial presentation of the theory. In later chapters, the model will be amended to include temporal effects.

Collective Identity and Collective Action Frames

Figure 3-1 reveals that collective identity is the central variable of the model. If and how a movement identity is realized, not only determines, if and what kind of movement action will take place. It also decides to a large extent, whether the movement has any impact on social and political practices. The collective identity also influences type and extent of collective action frames, which ultimately trigger collective action that may or may not have an extra-movement impact. In fact, collective identity and collective action frames are that intertwined, some scholars do not distinguish between the two concepts.[95] New Age is a prime example of a movement — or, if you wish, proto-movement — that has succeeded in the establishment of a collective identity that does not incorporate any significant collective action proper frames. Thus, collective identity is central for movement success and failure, action or passivity, existence or non-existence. That does not mean, however, that is also the most upstream variable.

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[95] Melucci (1985: 794), for instance, defines solidarity, that is the ability to overcome the free rider problem, as the capability of an actor to share a collective identity.
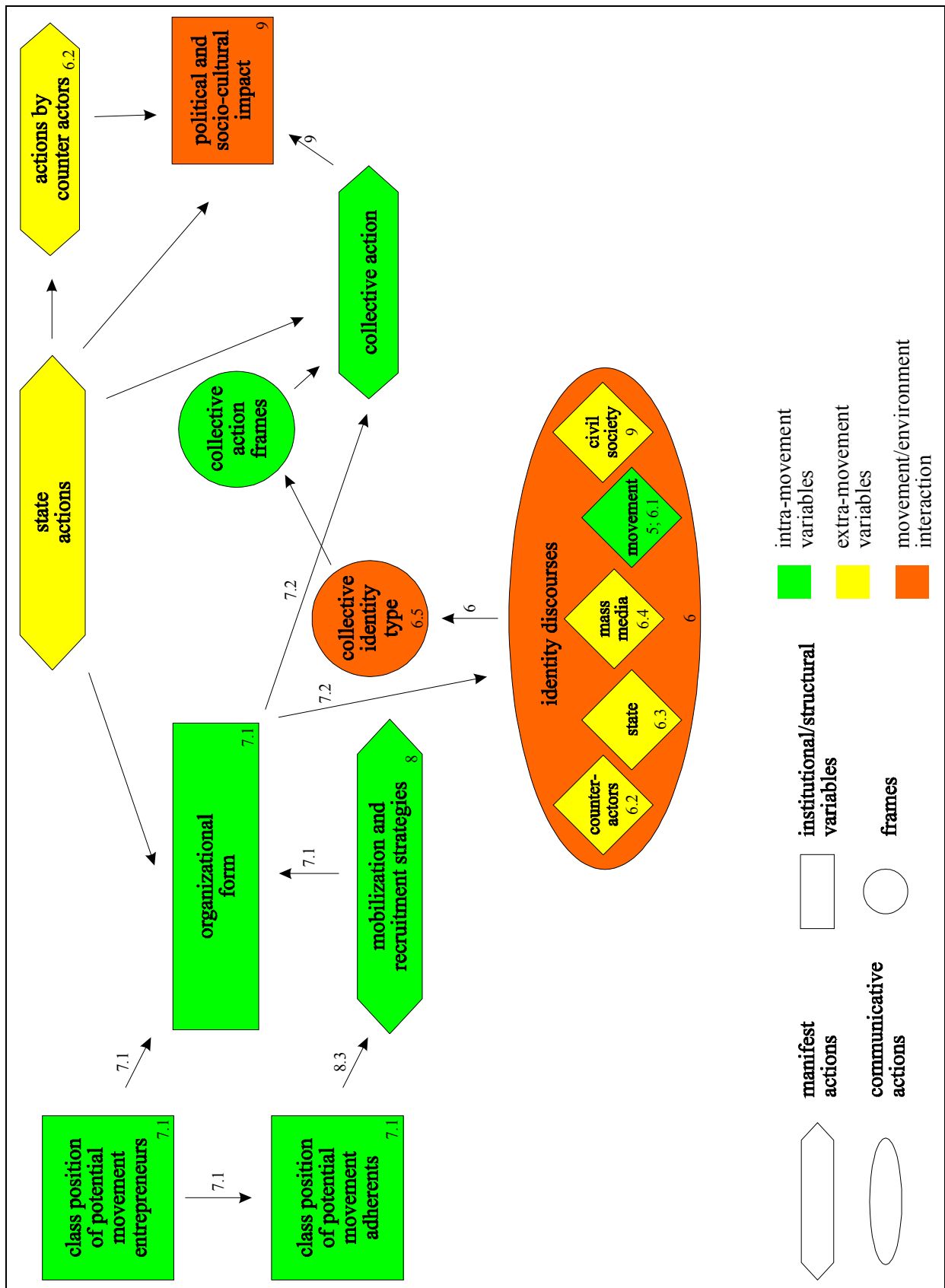
Figure 3-1 Main Theoretical Model *(Numbers denote chapters principally concerned with respective part of the model)*

The State

A look at Figure 3-1 instead identifies the state as the most influential actor. State actions can potentially trigger, inhibit or shape most variables in the model. The state can legally favor or prohibit certain organizational forms of movement. For instance, a state might outlaw voluntary associations that exceed certain membership numbers. Such provision would fetter the development of large umbrella organizations as movement vehicles. A state also can prohibit and probably effectively repress certain types of actions, e.g., demonstrations, strikes, lock-outs, riots. Such proceeding would limit a movement's collective action repertoire. The state has even an impact on such intangible assets as collective identity. Not only can the state propaganda apparatus influence a movement's reception in the general public, the state also regulates mass media discourse, which is particularly important as multiplicator for movement discourses. The state as most powerful collective actor might even serve as base model for successful collective actors.

State action is decisive for movement success or failure. However, across advanced industrial states, state activity towards movements can frequently be considered a parameter and therefore cannot explain differential success. Action repertoire regulations across different states and across different contenders vary only marginally. Media regulations within the OECD states are converging; so do regulations concerning organizational forms. Due to the global success of the nation state and other globalization trends, even the cognitive territory for social movements is increasingly similar across states. Of course, some variations do exist, in particular with regards to the new religious movements. These movements face strong state opposition in many continental EU states, while the US and UK have adopted a *laissez faire* policy towards novel religious contenders. In contrast, new s o c i a l movements faced a much fiercer (and subtler) repression in the US-American polity at their inception (Gitlin 1980). By and large, though, differences in outlook and success of contemporary movements is brought about by actors other than the state. Indeed, it will be shown, that given the stark policy differences media discourses on New Age in the US and the FRG are surprisingly similar.

Social Class Position

Instead, differing class position of the recruitment pool constitutes the chief cause for differential movement development. That does not mean a straightforward Marxist

explanation of social movements is appropriate, rather what has been termed *social opportunity structure* (Eder 1993: 10) — the social structural equivalent of Tilly's political opportunity structure (Scott 1995: 173) — models the relation between class position and movement success best. In essence, social opportunity structure denotes the non-political social environment which inhibits or facilitates collective action.[96] Persons in like class positions face similar social opportunity structures and, thus, are located in similar positions within equivalent social networks. These network positions also come with certain amounts of economic and cultural resources.

For instance, new social movements have recruited disproportionally from the new middle class, whose members have an ample amount of resources vital for movement development at their disposal. At the same time, these persons are located in networks that facilitate cognitive liberation.

In contrast, New Age is rooted in what once was termed mass society, and in contemporary sociological thought has been characterized as *middle America* (Gans [1988] 1991). These are persons, who usually command only over moderate amounts of material and cultural capital and almost no symbolic capital. In addition, Middle America is marked by a surprising paucity of voluntary associations. In other words, Middle Americans lack grassroots networks. These different social environments will be shown to generate different types of movements.

Movement Organization and Recruitment Patterns

The influence of social locations on movement identity and action is mediated through shape and extent of social movement organization. This part of the model obviously owes much to resource mobilization theory. Central in this respect is above all the structure of the organization and the social carriers of its leadership. In chapters 6 through 8 it will be shown that the organization of New Age into a movement market, in which small for-profit businesses prevail, has important ramifications for the movement identity — in particular as it is shaped within the mass media. This organizational form also ultimately entails consequences for the movement's efficacy in both cultural and political spheres.

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[96] Of course, political opportunity structures also entail social opportunity structures (Polletta 1999: 67).

	Mobilization (*Instrumental Goals*)			Movement Impact (*Terminal Goals*)	
				New Advantages	Admission
Political Goals	new	new	*new*	policy changes	polity
Cultural Goals	members	resources	*network structures*	changes in cultural practices	civil society

Table 3-1 Dimensions of Movement Success (New Age's Goals Shaded)

Political and Cultural Impact

The last part of the model is concerned with the impact of the movement activities. Success and failure of movements depend on the configuration of all of the above mentioned variables. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to develop a convincing conceptualization of movement success (Amenta & Young 1999; Andrews 1997: 800; Giugni 1998: 383ff; Giugni 1999: xx-xxi). For instance, it is debatable, if a movement that falters after achieving its immediate goals should be considered successful. It is also unclear, whether the institutionalization of a movement be considered a success, even when movement goals are not or only partially realized.

Gamson's (1975b: 29) two-dimensional notion, which distinguishes between the achievement of *new advantages* regarding movement goals and the *acceptance* of the movement as a legitimate contender within the polity, still remains the best known conceptualization of movement success (Giugni 1998: 378). Several modifications to this concept have been proposed (*ibid*., p. 383f), which, however, all share a bias for political goals (Goodwin & Jasper 1999: 35; Moore 1999: 97) and are, thus, too narrow for movements which neither seek admittance to the polity nor try to influence specific policies. The New Age movement constitutes such a case, as it passively awaits the change of larger cultural practices and worldviews. Arguably, New Age's most important goal is *recruitment*, which according to New Age ideology will automatically lead to social and cultural change. The prime arena for cultural and social claims is civil society: If a change in cultural practices is to not be limited to the movement itself, the movement must gain admittance to civil society. The success of culturally oriented movements can thus be measured through an application of the new advantages and acceptance criteria with respect to civil society. Since the main actors for social change in civil society are social movements "proper," i.e., movements that base in networks of solidarity and engage in collective action proper,

movement success can also be measured in terms of the *emergence of new network structures* (Diani 1997). Indeed, it will later be contended that only if the provision of new networks is successful, it becomes likely that any goals directed at extra-movement actors will be achieved.

One might conceivably criticize this conceptualization of movement success for carrying, possibly even perpetuating, a long-standing bias towards political and institutional changes in movement theory. After all, New Age aims primarily at personal transformation and is dispassionate about changes in polity and society at large. Is therefore a conceptualization of movement success that centers around political and social change not utterly inappropriate for New Age? There might be good reasons to measure New Age's success on its own terms. But there are also compelling reasons to focus on New Age's socio-political impact. One reason I already mentioned is that a sole focus on successful agents of social change in the explanation of that change is clearly insufficient (Williams & Kubal 1999). Only, if we contrast those collective actors that do produce change to those who do not, we will be able to identify conditions that lead to the emergence of social movements.

An important theoretical rationale that explains why people do not protest the existing socio-political configurations draws on a longstanding theoretical tradition that includes Marx's discussion of false consciousness, Gramsci's analysis of hegemony and McAdam's concept of cognitive liberation. These theories posit that the

> "apparent absence of popular vigor is traceable […] not to apathy but to the very raw materials of history — that complex of rules, manners, power relationships, and memories that collectively comprise what is called culture. 'The masses' do not rebel […] because they have been culturally organized […] not to rebel. They have, instead, been instructed in deference. Needless to say, this is the kind of social circumstance that is not readily apparent to the millions who live within it." (Goodwyn 1978: x)

As Steven Lukes (1974) has shown, the most pervasive form of power is concealed from those being ruled by it. New Agers are uneasy with today's ruling ideologies. They wish for more holistic and less technological approaches to social problems, they are alienated by the existing societal fragmentation (Schorsch 1988: 33). But they do not consider these problems a result of the existing social organization. Instead, they seek individual remedies to a situation that is primarily socially induced. In this framework, New Age's assumptions on social change tailored to individual "needs" constitute a cultural modulation, but at the same

time partake in the existing hegemony. As a consequence, they ultimately fail to achieve the hoped-for changes.

Even if we would evaluate New Age goals on their own terms, it is still clear that the personal transformation New Agers are related to anticipated societal changes. In fact, the personal transformations many New Agers labor to achieve make sense to them only in a context where these transformations are part of wider social transformations that inevitably will occur in the future. However, most substantial societal changes are brought about through collective action proper. If the anticipated societal changes will not happen, does that not mean that the empirically unwarranted New Age beliefs on the relationship between personal and societal transformation, will ultimately New Age's personal transformations futile? Therefore, a focus on the political and social impact of New Age is an important measure of New Age's success, even if that impact is not an expressed movement goal.

In conclusion, I propose the addition of a third dimension onto two Gamson's two-dimensional success scheme. That dimension reflects that Gamson's categories of success (new advantages and inclusion) apply to polity as well as civil society.[97] These goals thus define the movement impact. To achieve any impact a movement needs to mobilize resources and new members (Stern 1999: 93) and create new social structures, which are (to some extent) instrumental goals.[98] Table 3-1 visualizes the dimensions of movement success as it is defined here. It will be shown that New Age, which focuses on cultural goals, does not trigger change outside the movement, because it has failed to establish new network structures.

In summary, the proposed model considers the outlook of collective identity the primary determinant for mode, extent and impact of New Age in particular and movements in general. Collective identity is in turn dependent on the organization of the movement. Class origin, state actions, other collective actors and cultural practices including the set of existing frames serve as background variables. Let me now elaborate the concept of collective identity.

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[97] On a more general level one can, of course, apply Gamson's two-dimensional scheme to any institutions. However, social movements operate mainly in polity and civil society..

[98] Some other-worldly oriented religious movements might consider these goals ends-in-themselves (Jasper & Poulsen 1995: 497).

The Central Variable: Collective Identity

The first part of this section will discuss the function of collective identity within the larger theoretical approach. In the second part the question, how collective identity can best be conceptualized, will be answered.

Collective Identity and Collective Action

A vast and partly contradictory array of functions has been attributed to the role of identity in social theory. Among others, it has been considered as a precondition for collective action, a mobilization resource, a by-product of social movement activities, a definition criterion for social movements, a necessity for the functioning of society, a specific form of rationality, or, an objective in itself for collective actors.

Identity as a Resource

Treating identity as a mobilization resource (Bader 1991: 127; Bernstein 1997; Williams 1995: 126) or "a specific form of rationality" (Donati 1984: 844), leads to redundancies discussed above.[99] Incorporating identity as a "soft incentive" renders the selective incentive notion into a tautology or, at minimum, obscures the actual processes for sake of retaining a rational choice language (Marx Ferree 1992: 34). To be sure, some collective identities might blur the distinction of individual and group interests (Gamson 1992a: 57; Melucci 1988: 340) or prohibit some routes of action inhibiting the pursuit of egoistic goals (Pestello 1991: 26). In these cases, however, no free-rider-problem arises in the first place. If individuals cannot or do not want to distinguish between their individual and group pay-off matrices, their joint preference structures do not assume a prisoners' dilemma. Consequently, Olson's model would no longer adequately depict the actual decision making process. Thus, solidarity (in the sense of overcoming the free-rider-problem) and collective identity are intertwined issues, but should be treated separately in the theoretical analysis (Gamson 1992a: 61).

Identity as Stabilizing Element for Modern Societies

Treating collective identity as stabilizing element for modern societies (Donati 1984:852; Melucci 1989: 11, 83f; Melucci 1994: 101; Touraine 1985: 774), also creates unnecessary problems. First, one would have to demonstrate that collective identities indeed would help to assist complex societies to identify newly emerging problems and select viable action lines. If

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[99] See section 2.3.5.

one would succeed in this respect, the shortcoming of functionalist explanations, which can explain the reproduction of phenomena but not their origins, still lingers.

Identity as a Goal in itself

Considering identity a goal-in-itself for the new movements (Bernstein 1997: 535; Offe 1985: 828f), would simply shift the collective identity problem back in time. Inevitably, the question, how new movements bearing already some, however vague, identity had emerged, would arise. That does not mean that the notion of collective identity as an objective is completely worthless. But the creation of collective identity via intentional efforts should be considered one technique for identity construction among others. Its importance should remain an empirical question. For instance, new social movements frequently engage in more or less deliberate efforts to construct their respective identities, while New Age identity seems to be a mere by-product of movement activity.

Identity as a Prerequisite for Collective Action

In line with authors that treat collective identity as definition criterion for collective actors (Schmitt 1990: 54) or, as a precondition for collective action (Bernstein 1997; Gould 1993: 185; Melucci 1985: 795), collective identity will here be treated as empirically inseparable aspect of collective action.

> *Definition 4-1*: Collective identity is the ideational representation of a collective actor and its actions.

Thus, the structure of a collective identity frame decides, if a movement engages primarily in collective action proper, collective behavior, or mass behavior. If a collective identity entails frames that trigger the production of a collective good — say: the high culture of some *ethnie* — collective action proper ensues. If the collective identity of a movement serves merely as ideological underpinning for certain lines of action — say: a frequent resort to meditation — mass behavior results. Note that the content of the collective identity frame ultimately decides, if movement action is to be considered collective action proper, collective behavior, or mass behavior. Meditating on the premise to be a New Ager for one's self enlightenment qualifies as mass behavior (if sufficient numbers of individuals do likewise). Participating in meditation sessions for Tibetan self-determination would qualify as collective behavior, unless these sessions would be conscious attempts to gain public visibility, which would even qualify them as collective action proper. The theoretical function of collective identity, thus,

is the collective representation of collective action. That still does illuminate the building blocs of collective identity, though.

The Concept of Collective Identity

> "Collective Identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientations of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place" (Melucci 1989: 34)

Three distinct approaches to the substance of collective identity, namely *primordialism*, *structuralism* and *constructionism*, can be discerned.

Primordialist theories are common in explanations of "ethnic," "linguistic," or "religious" identities. At first glance, it may seem odd to discuss primordialist approaches to identity in an analysis of New Age, a collectivity that certainly does not claim any primordialist roots. Likewise, the main comparative cases — the new social movements — also seem to be far removed from primordialism. However, new social movements — in particular the women's and bi/lesbian/gay movements — have recently become increasingly primordialized in scientific discourse. Joppke (1996: 449), for instance, claims that "'[m]ulticulturalism' [is] the seeking of equal rights and recognition for ethnic, racial, religious, or sexually defined groups; […] multiculturalism's identities are primordial, ascribed, and all-encompassing." Chodorow is a prominent example of a feminist theorist, who, via an deviation through psychoanalytic theory, arrives at a primordialist conception of gender.[100] To be sure, some of these groups, most notably women but also some racial groups, do r e f e r   t o ascriptive characteristics their members share.[101] But neither do all or even most primordial

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[100] In a nutshell, Chodorow (1978) argues that gender stratification emerges because women and men encounter different post-oedipal phases due to the fact that their primary caregiver is of the same b i o l o g i c a l sex in the case of women and of the opposite in the case of men.

[101] To disregard these biological features, because they are only socially constructed and not 'objective' markers of difference, precludes the examination of possibly important construction devices, which the referral to alleged or real biological differences are. That does not mean that the blue color of people necessarily must lead to ingroup solidarity or outgroup xenophobia, but it sure helps to have an easily implementable screening device at hand. Those readers, who are afraid, that attention to nature would mean the renunciation of constructionism in favor of positivism, I would like to refer to Luhmann:

> "If a cognitive system [read: the human mind] cannot directly access its environment [read: social and physical reality], we can deny the existence of the latter, but equally and with more plausibility belief the environment exists as we experience it. We cannot reject either conception. But that does not mean that the environment is dubious, but the neat ontological distinction between "existence" and "inexistence" is." (Luhmann 1990: 37, translation mine).

characteristics give rise to collective identities, nor does the actual degree primordiality have a one-to-one relationship with the degree of conceived primordiality, nor does actual primordiality trump imagined primordiality, as the observation that gender has not achieved the same status as ethnicity (MacKinnon [1984] 1987: 44) shows.

Primordialization of new social movements does not only happen in the academy. Despite vocal advocacy for a constructionist understanding of gender, sexual orientation and the like, these identities have also become primordialized in public discourse (Gitlin 1994: 153; Taylor & Rupp 1993: 32). The major impact constructionist theorizing has had on public discourse until now, is that "'cultural essences' replace 'racial essences'" (Gitlin 1997a: 94). Religious identity is also frequently considered primordial, sometimes on its own right (Smith 1991: 6), sometimes because religion serves as a boundary maker for ethnic groups.[102] Of course, since new religious movements are considered novel phenomena such reasoning has not affected their study. The absence of primordialist theorizing on the new religions then either reveals the latter's non-religious character, or — as will be argued here — exposes the empirical inadequacy of the assumption that all religions contain strong primordial elements.

Nevertheless, many religious are primordially or quasi-primordially c o d e d , possibly because the image of temporal continuity helps to establish seemingly stable boundaries for collective actors. More importantly, though, there are some identities that have historically acquired a superiority over others and whose properties are frequently mirrored in less important identities. In modernity, one of the, if not the omnipresent collective identity is national identity. "Primordial" ethno-nations have become a masterframe, upon which other collective identities can successfully be modeled.[103] Ethno-nationalist movements also can be considered the main competitors for both new social and new religious movements (Eder 1993: 5; Gamson 1987: 2f; McClurg Mueller 1992: 7). Finally, because primordialism can be considered a special case of structuralism, a rudimentary theory of national identity will also deliver some valuable hints about the strength and weakness of structuralist identity theories.

Structuralist theories of identity underlie the collective behavior paradigm and Neo-Marxist theories. Much of new social movement theory proper also recurs to structuralism. Although all structuralist approaches share positivist pitfalls with primordialism,

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[102] Implicitly Gellner (1994: 178) does so.

[103] Habermas (1995: 29), for instance, claims that national identity is the first modern form of collective identity. Joppke (1996: 451) calls nation "the pivotal cultural community of the modern world."

structuralism unlike primordialism does have its merits regarding the question, why some collective identities become constructed rather than others, if the proper structural cleavages are analyzed.

Constructionism disposes with the weaknesses of structuralism by focusing on the contingencies of identities, which for constructionists arise exclusively through the interaction of individuals. The constructionist identity concept, which will be employed throughout the remainder of this study, will be presented in the last part of this subsection.

Primordialism

Since there are still very few explicit elaborations of the primordialist view of one of the newer movements,[104] the present discussion of primordialism will focus on ethnic and national identities. Most raised criticisms, however, can analogously be applied to any primordialist conception of identity.[105]

Primordialist theoreticians argue, that individuals in modern times strive most importantly for the achievement of two needs. On the one hand, they want to acquire an identity that is publicly acknowledged and preferably highly valued in their environment. On the other, they demand an effective political order. The first need usually is enhanced by the adoption of an (ethno-)national identity, while the second is best served in a nationally homogenous state.

The formation of ethnic identity is modeled as based on primordial attachments, which stem from certain cultural patterns one is born into. "These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an in effable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves," (Geertz 1963: 109) which ultimately leads to the identification of oneself p r i n c i p a l l y with a group of people, which share the same "cultural" background, i.e. one's nation or ethnicity. If this identification contradicts the civic loyalties a modern state, i.e., if nations do not coincide with the population of a state, then citizens "risk a loss of definition as an autonomous person, either through absorption into a culturally undifferentiated mass or, what is even worse, through domination by some other rival ethnic, racial, or linguistic community that is able to imbue that order with the temper of its own

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[104] Posner (1992: 85-110) is an exception.

[105] It will quickly become clear that nations and ethnicities are no identities *sui generis* and that therefore the present compartmentalization nationalism studies is hampers further development of identity studies.

personality" (*ibid.*). Ultimately this constellation leads to nationalism, the attempt of an alignment of the cultural borders of a nation with those of a state polity.

Which characteristics define a nation? Geertz enumerates those genera of primordial attachments, which c a n lead to nation formation as assumed blood ties, race, language, religion, custom (*ibid.*, p. 112f). A look at this list already should raise suspicion: Apart from the empirical observation that these are the lines at which nations have occurred,[106] there seems to be no rationale, why these different phenomena should be lumped together.

Even if one assumes that all these categories can reasonably be seen as part of primordial attachments, it still remains unclear, what or who decides, which of these attachments become decisive for nation formation — a question that should be of vital interest for sociologists. After all, according to conservative estimates more than 10,000 protonations exist by these criteria, a fraction of which ever enters "visibility" in public discourse (Gellner 1983: 43-45). Thus, on top of the inductive ontogenesis of primordialist understandings of ethnicities, there is not even an empirical justification for the latter introduction into social theory.

Anthony Smith, today's leading proponent of primordialism, has clearly recognized this problem and attempts to embed his justification for the primordialist approach in a much more complex conceptual framework. However, the reduction of parsimony does not pay off in an increase of explanatory power. For Smith (1991: 15), "[n]ational identity and the nation are complex constructs composed of a number of interrelated components — ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic and legal-political." A discussion of the last three elements of this concept of a nation is not relevant in this context, since they are not specific for the primordialist view.[107] What is here important for Smith's conceptualization of nationalities is, that "the nation is a subvariety of the *ethnie*" (Smith 1993: 130). The fifth criterion, culture,

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[106] Even this is disputable in several cases: Which of these "cleavages" leads to a distinction between Serbs and Montenegrins? How came the German and Austrian nations in the face of religiously much more homogenous Austro-Bavarian and Prussian protonations into being? Why is there a Swiss nation resilient to all "ethnic" divides? I don't even want to evoke the problems most Latin American nations pose for the primordialist view.

[107] To be sure, "territory" in its form as "homeland" is also treated by Smith as an element of an *ethnie* (Smith 1991: 22f). Likewise "warfare" and "state making" (Smith 1991: 26f), in essence legal-political variables, are considered as experiences and symbols frequently critical for the creation of an ethnic identity. The validity of the following critique, however, is not affected by these conceptualizations.

is so ambiguous, it is not worth to be analyzed further.[108] Smith's vagueness in respect to the concept of culture will lurk through the now following critique of the concept of an *ethnie*, which is central for Smith nationality concept.

Smith identifies the ethnic community as one necessary element of a nation. He lists six main attributes of ethnic communities:[109]

1. a collective proper name;
2. a myth of common ancestry;
3. shared historical memories;
4. one or more differentiating elements of common culture;
5. an association with a specific homeland;
6. a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population.

It suffices for my argument to discuss two of these attributes, namely number four and six, since Smith himself emphasizes the subjective character of all components save the fourth one,[110] as this subjectiveness immunizes these markers against strictly primordialist interpretations. Still, the criterion last on Smith's list, deserves some attention here, since it clearly renders his theory into a tautology. By definition, Smithian *ethnies* share a sense of solidarity and have therefore solved the free-rider-problem. If a potential *ethnie* thus does not engage in collective action, it simply demonstrates that it is not an *ethnie*.[111]

What happens though, if one removes solidarity as necessary element of the definition? Then,

"[i]t is only when we come to the varying elements of a common culture that differentiate one population from another that more objective attributes enter the

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[108] "Culture" for Smith at times is transmitted through "communication and socialization" (1991: 6), while at other times it is just an expression of "objective 'cultural markers'" (1991: 23). Similarly awkward is Smith's use of culture as an explanatory variable. According to him national identities derive some of there depth in the individual consciousness, since they are rooted in culture. "Whereas class identities emerge from the sphere of production and exchange, religious [and national] identities derive from the spheres of communication and socialization. They are based on alignments of culture and its elements - values, symbols, myth and traditions, often codified in custom and ritual" (Smith 1991: 6). Anyone who believes that class identity is not derived from the very same "spheres of communication and socialization" (*ibid.*) should consult the empirically oriented account of the making of the "working class" in Willis (1977).

[109] I use the terms "ethnicity" , "ethnic community" and "ethnic group" interchangeably.

[110] "Shared historical memories at first sight also seem to qualify as a primordialist phenomenon" (Smith 1991: 22). However, it is once again Smith himself, who states that what he has "termed 'shared historical memories' may also take the form of a myth" (*ibid.*).

[111] The solidarity criterion also nicely disposes of the problem that most potential ethnic groups (either based on Smith's remaining five criteria or on Geertz's six elements) do not become ethnicities; they simply are none by definition.

picture. Language, religion, customs and pigmentation are often taken to describe objective 'cultural markers' or differentiae that persist independently of the will of individuals, and even appear to constrain them." (Smith 1991: 23).

At this point, Smith has basically returned to Geertz's elements of an ethno-nation, which leaves us with the problems that need not be reiterated here.[112] In sum, primordialist approaches to ethnicity are a product of 19th century social science and cannot be justified on empirical premises. If nations, arguably the most successful collective actors of our times, cannot derive their strength from actual primordiality, it seems unlikely that any other actor could.

Collective Memory

Most students of movements other than nationalism have recognized the weakness of primordial approaches to collective identity. Many contemporary identity studies instead resort to a replacement of "racial essences" through "cultural essences" (Gitlin 1997b). Culture in this sense is considered malleable only with great difficulties over long time intervals that span several generations. That way unpopular biologistic connotations of ethnic or gender identities have been shed without dropping ascription as an integral quality of these identities. Implicit in this theoretical shift from primordialism to *quasi-primordialism* is almost always a notion of collective memory as it has been developed by Durkheim's student Maurice Halbwachs.

Collective memory can be conceptualized as consisting of two types of memory, namely *communicative memory*, which originates exclusively in everyday communications, and *cultural memory*, which is removed from everyday practices and refers to objectivations of culture (Assmann 1995). Both types of memory relate to groups, but particularly cultural memory seems to be suited to as foundation for quasi-primordial identities, since

> "[i]n cultural memory, […] islands of time expand into memory spaces of 'retrospective contemplativeness' [*retrospektive Besonnenheit*]. This expression stems from Aby Warburg. He ascribed a type of 'mnemonic energy' to the objectivation of culture of culture, pointing not only to works of high art, but also to posters, postage stamps, costumes, customs, etc. In cultural formation, a collective experience crystallizes, whose meaning, when touched upon, may suddenly become accessible again across millennia." (*ibid*., p. 129)

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[112] Smith 's add-ons of a crude instrumentalist theory of nationalism and even the constructivist insight scattered throughout the book may not concern us here, since they do not affect the criticisms levered against primordialism as a necessary component of a theory of nationalism.

Cultural objectivation helps to construct the common image of a group's past. But which groups become constructed with their help is open to debate. For instance, the symbols that point to the events in 1789 can be used for the reconstruction of the group of *inter alia* republicans, revolutionaries, plebeians, democrats, ethnic Frenchmen, or civic Frenchmen. That is a question that can only be answered through a look at historical actors who utilize these symbols. In contrast, there seems little that would point any innate affinity between specific collective memories and specific collective identities. It should come to no surprise then that empirical studies have difficulties in identifying collective memory processes *s u i g e n e r i s*. Accordingly, Olick and Robbins' (1998) extensive review on the literature on cultural memory reports an "exogenous bias" in the study of cultural memory.

> "Even cultural approaches, while emphasizing meaning, seem to locate the source of change in political cultures, not in the textual dynamics of [cultural] memory itself."
> (Olick & Robbins 1998: 130)

Olick and Robbins themselves would like to change this situation, but it remains unclear, why a more endogenous explanation of collective memory development would be desirable. To the contrary, a look at a few empirical studies suggests that the focus on political culture is deserved. Thomas Beamish and his collaborators have shown that even over the relatively short period of twenty years collective "memory" reconstructs aspects of an identity — in this case the identity of the peace movement — so radically that newer identity conceptions outright contradict more dated ones in virtually everybody's mind. Indeed, even peace movement activists, whose cause would have benefited from a retention of the original conception, have adopted the new identity (Beamish, Molotch & Flacks 1995). Schwartz's (1997) study on the uses of Abraham Lincoln as a symbol shows how heavily the content of collective memory depends on the actual political environment. Early 20th century images of Lincoln served to remind the African American communities to strive for economic self-sufficiency. During WW1, Lincoln symbolized progress in ethnic relations; just prior to the New Deal he helped justifying segregation. And, during the heyday of the civil rights movement, Lincoln, arguably a racist, was imagined as a white counterpart to Martin Luther King, Jr. A third, extensive historical study on collective memory concludes that "images of continuity are usually illusions" (Fentress & Wickham 1992: 200). If collective memory is that easily rec o n s t r u c t e d and if the same collective memory can refer to a variety of

collectivities, it certainly is inadmissible to consider collective identities a by-product of collective memory.

Does that mean the adoption of an ahistorical view on the construction of collective identities? Of course not, history is not infinitely malleable (Schudson 1989), nor are identities constructed in a linguistic vacuum. But the processes that govern collective memory production are far more important for the construction of identities than the substance of collective memory itself. These processes are far better captured through tools that avoid the methodological and ontological holism many Durkheimian analyses suffer from. For instance, already Merton's ([1946] 1971: 22-28, 41f) usage of *Gestalt* psychology allows for a more differentiated analysis on how deeply held cultural preconceptions influence the viability of social phenomena. Today it is still Goffman's (1974: 40-82) ingenious *frame keying* concept that allows insightful analyses of cultural references.[113]

Structuralism

Having rejected primordialist and quasi-primordialist culturalist approaches to identity, the question, how structuralist approaches to collective identity generally fare, arises. Such approaches date back to Karl Marx. Today analytical Marxism, functionalist theories of nationalism, and new social movement theory rely on structuralist readings of identity. To be sure, most structuralists do not speak of "collective identity," but of group consciousness, which assumes the same theoretical function attributed here to collective identity. The structuralist notion of collective identity is two-tired. It consists of a latent *class-in-itself* contained in the "structure" of society and a set of social configurations that can raise class consciousness and turn the class-in-itself into a *class-for-itself.*

Orthodox Marxists define the class-in-itself through the relation of the class members to the means of production. More generally, latent classes are denoted by the similar structural positions of the class constituents.

A wide variety of groups that can potentially become collective actors exists, but ordinarily conceptualizations of the (lower) classes contain an element of relative economic deprivation.[114] For instance, the relation of one's vernacular to the existing state language is a

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[113] See section 0.

[114] Lash & Urry (1984: 46) argue implicitly that the concept of class consciousness can analogously be applied to all sorts of groups.

structural condition important for functionalist oriented students of nationalism. These scholars allege, that primordialist ethnicity markers identify the most salient social structural conditions. In essence, primordialism is a specific form of structuralism.[115]

Although new social movement theorists usually admit that in the case of the new movements the concept of latent groups is not applicable, they, too, agree that for the earlier peasant and labor movements "the determination of the identity of the agents was given through categories belonging to the social structure" (Slater 1985: 4).[116] Social structure is treated as if it were an inherent empirical condition of society, rather than an analytical device for the sociologist, or an invention of public discourse. However, empirical research has shown that the collective identity of the labor movement at its inception was equally negotiated and contested rather than 'given' (Bonnell 1983; Calhoun 1993; Kelley 1997: 96). In conclusion,

> "[w]e have gotten too used to speaking of the passage of the class 'in itself' to the class 'for itself,' of an accepted situation to a consciousness that is raised with the transition to political action. Actually, there is no class "in itself"; there is no class without a class consciousness." (Touraine [1984] 1988: 69)

What are the social patterns that give rise to class consciousness? In a passage of *Das achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonarparte*, selectively quoted by analytical Marxists (Barbalet 1991: 456; Elster 1985: 345f; Hardin 1991: 375; Sabia 1986: 55), Marx described the absence of class consciousness, read: collective identity, despite a "group-in-itself character" for the case of petty peasants:

> "The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. The isolation is increased by France's bad means of communication and by the poverty of the peasants. Their field of production, the small-holding, admits no division of labor in its cultivation, no application of science, and, therefore, no diversity of development, no variety of talent, no wealth of social relationships. [...] Insofar as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them into hostile positions to the latter, they form a class. Insofar as

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[115] Hunt/Benford/Snow (1994: 187) also group primordialist and structural identities into one category. Bader (1991: 82-84) includes in his enumeration of structural groups *inter alia* nations as a subvariety of ascriptive groups. Other potential conflict groups according to him encompass classes, elites, politically excluded groups.

[116] Laclau (1985: 27) argues similarly for the Latin American case; Brand (1985a: 9); Dalton/Kuechler/Bürklin (1990: 11); Klandermans (1991: 26); Tarrow (1989: 58) propose this criterion in their general hypothesis on new social movements.

there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests beget no community, no national bond and political organization among them, they do not form a class." (Marx [1852] 1952: 403f, translation fromElster 1985: 345f).

Apart from the structural class location, Marx identifies at least three further requirements for the emergence of class consciousness. First, frequent interactions among class members foster the generation of class consciousness (Hechter 1987: 42). For Marx, efficient communication structures are essential for an increase in the frequency of interaction. Today, though, dense communication channels have become a double-edged sword, as long-distance communication also permits higher geographical mobility. Thereby, it allows for frequent changes of interaction partners, which, in turn, weakens the feeling of solidarity (Elster 1985: 355).In addition, communication via personal ties is also higher on authenticity and resulting legitimacy. Thus, grassroots networks are more advantageous than mass media as vehicles for the spread of class consciousness. Marx second factor for the emergence of class consciousness is organization. However, the construction of any organization presupposes already the existence of a rudimentary collective identity. Hence, the organizational variable becomes explanatory only at later stages of collective identity building. Thirdly, Marx suggests, that cultural and material resources are required for identity constructions. 19th century French peasants would have required some material resources including spare time to organize, printing materials, carriages, postage for the construction of a communication network among themselves. A peasant organization would have required reading and writing skills as well as the peasantry's imagination of an organization for protest beyond the occasional food riots. Today, social movement need meeting spaces, marketing specialists, and so on.

In summary, all three conjectures from the Eighteenth Brumaire are sound. However, it is far more parsimonious to incorporate them s e p a r a t e l y as potential factors in collective identity building processes, rather than to include them a priori into the collective identity concept.

Many Marxists also consider a fourth factor, which is at odds with the collective identity concept advocated here. The hypothesis, that "[t]he cultural heterogeneity of class members may also be an obstacle to collective action,"(Elster 1985: 356; see alsoSabia 1986: 52) is

part of several neo-Marxist theories. Oftentimes, this element is interpreted with the help of a primordialist conception of culture/ethnicity. Hechter, for instance, writes:

> "The greater the intragroup differences of culture, particularly in so far as identifiability is concerned, the greater the probability that the culturally distinct […] collectivity will be status solidary. Identifiable cultural differences include: Language (accent), distinctive religious practices, and life style." (Hechter 1975: 43)

Although this thesis does not directly appeal to primordialism, Hechter does consider somewhat "objective" cultural differences important. As the previous discussion has shown, though, primordialism is inadmissible. However, if one interprets cultural homogeneity as the receptivity of members of a given group towards specific symbols and frames, then the notion of "cultural homogeneity" can be reconciled with the theoretical assumptions made here. Groups are then not considered culturally homogenous in themselves, but rather the reactions of the members of (previously constructed) groups towards particular frames and symbols are modeled idealtypically as uniform. The discussion of cultural resonances below will elaborate on this point.

A Remark on Catnet

All major conjectures Marxist class consciousness contains can, thus be considered factors for collective identity. Does that also apply to non-Marxist structuralist approaches groups? Take the probably least "primordialized" structuralist notion of collective identity, Charles Tilly's *catnet*:

> "There are c a t e g o r i e s of people who all share a common characteristic. […] A full-fledged category contains people all of whom recognize their common characteristic, and whom everyone recognizes as having that characteristic. There are also n e t w o r k s of people who are linked to each other, directly or indirectly, by a specific kind of interpersonal bond. […] The idea of o r g a n i z a t i o n follows directly. The more extensive [a group's] common identity and internal networks, the more organized the group. CATNESS × NETNESS = ORGANIZATION." (Tilly 1978: 62f; emphasis in the original)

Although this definition avoids an outright positivist orientation, the "catness" of a group is usually treated as given and constant over time (Melucci 1989: 34). Tilly himself, for instance, sees no need to explain the high catness of one's nationality (Tilly 1978: 63). Such proceeding is clearly impossible, if one wants to explain the very emergence of a group category (Hunt, Benford & Snow 1994: 187f). In general, structuralism favors a static view of collective identity that prevents the analysis of social change.

Excursus: Class Structure as Analytical Concept

Groups-in-themselves cannot therefore be conceptualized as unmediated precursors of collective identities. However, a nuanced treatment of groups-in-themselves does not imply a rejection of class analysis in identity studies. Classes are useful analytical tools, since class "structure is generating positions, which stand for opportunities (or lack of opportunities) to act" (Eder 1993: 10). A detection of such groups does not require the identification of ontological collectivities but an analysis of the important features of the social structure. If one believes that class is too ideologically contaminated a term, one might refer to what Iris Marion Young calls with reference to Jean-Paul Sartre a *séries*.

> "A series is a collective whose members are unified passively by the relation their actions have to material objects and practico-inert histories" (Young 1995a: 202).

This study will, though, stick for reasons of readability with the class label. Unlike the bulk of class concepts, which owe much to Marx and/or Weber, the class concept employed here is n o t relational but decidedly gradational: It determines class membership b y r e f e r e n c e t o , rather than i n r e l a t i o n to other classes.[117] In other words, the gradational concept differentiates between members of different classes on the bases of the available resources, but does not directly address the existing power relations between classes. Since the gradational class concept is not geared towards the explanation of class conflict, it works particularly well suited for an analysis of collective actors that are not actively involved in class struggle.[118] Class as it is understood in this thesis follows Bourdieu ([1979] 1982: 171ff).

> *Definition 4-2*: Class, as it is understood here, is oriented at "the structure of relationships among all relevant characteristics" (*ibid*., p. 182, translation mine). These characteristics encompass economic, cultural and social capital in Bourdieu's sense.

The rootedness of New Age in a certain class — *middle America* — has important ramifications for shape and effectiveness of New Age identity, as the scarcity of financial and organizational resources has prompted New Age entrepreneurs to organize New Age as a market. This organizational form in turn shares an affinity with universalist identities, as

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[117] See Wright (1997) for the distinction between gradational and relational class concepts, as well as for a forceful critique of the gradational notion employed here.

[118] Of course, that does not exclude the possibility that unintentionally the "interests" of certain class positions are fostered through movements that are based in certain classes.

market logic demands the inclusion of as many potential customers as possible. Hence, the class bases of a movement will affect the effectiveness of a movement, even if a class-in-itself does not translate into a class-for-itself. In fact, that it is primarily middle America that is attracted to New Age has little, if anything, to do with the fact that middle Americans might share a common interest. Instead, middle Americans primarily join New Age, because they face a problem only few of their fellow class members share. Namely, they lack spouses and/or children, which, in combination of middle America's avoidance of voluntary associations (Gans [1988] 1991), leads to social isolation.[119] The desire for integration into a family network might very well be class-specific, it certainly, however, is not a collective good for class members.

In summary, class just like primordial ties does not model identity appropriately. Let me, thus, now turn to an elaboration of radical constructionism, the paradigm of collective identity advanced in this study.

Social Constructionism

The critique of structuralism and primordialism yields two elements of a sound collective identity concept. First, notions of groups inherent in the social structure are flawed, therefore a theory of boundary marking has to be proposed. Second, given the possibility turnover in actual group membership, collective identities cannot be regarded empirical constants, but continuous processes (McAdam 1994: 41-43; Melucci 1988: 342; Melucci 1989: 35; Melucci 1996: 71ff; Rupp & Taylor 1999; Somers & Gibson 1994: 41, 73).

The Concept of Collective Identity

Both processual character and the anti-positivist boundaries can be realized by a concept rooted in frame analysis. Collective identities are considered as consisting of "a set of symbolic frames which collective actors use to represent their own actions to themselves and to others, within a system of social relationships" (Melucci 1992: 131). It become apparent that this conceptualization also facilitates the modeling of the relationship between collective and individual identities.

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[119] At bottom, the conception of middle America is strongly reminiscent of earlier conceptions of mass society:
    "The members of the masses in a metropolitan society know one another only as fractions in a specialized millieux: the man who fixes the car, the girl who serves your lunch, the saleslady, the woman who take care of your child during the day." (Mills [1956] 1959: 320)

Owing to the frame nature, the boundaries of the identity can never be sharply defined. Nevertheless, most collective actors obviously claim a stable and unambiguous identity for themselves, although very few of them actually at least approximate the unity and homogeneity displayed in their "official" discourse (Melucci 1988: 331; Melucci 1989: 26). Collective identities thus must contain boundary frames that construct the movement's sameness over time, *la mêmete*. This task can analytically be distinguished from the construction of *l'ipséité*, i.e. the self-identity contrasted with the otherness of all phenomena outside the collective identity in question (Bauman 1992: 676).[120]

Since identity frames are not contained in the social structure, they must be constructed through communicative acts of individuals. This begs the questions, which techniques are employed in their construction, and, what is the relationship between frames of individual identity and those of collective identity. Although "much research on collective identity is actually about [...] the ways in which social identities enter into the constitution of individual selves" (DiMaggio 1997: 275), with few exceptions (Johnston et al. 1994: 15), the dynamics between individual and collective identities have seldom been spelled out.[121] A first step towards a clarification of the relationship between individual and collective identity is a theory of the individual that is compatible with framing theory.

George Herbert Mead's theory of the individual lends itself easily to an incorporation into frame analysis. In at nutshell, Mead's theory attempts to shed light on the development of the individual in society. For Mead the individual cannot be seen as primary unit of the social process, since the core of the individual, mind,

> "...arises out of a social process that is logically antecedent. [...] It cannot be said that the individuals come first and the community later, for the individuals arise in the very process itself, just as much as the human body or any multi-cellular form is one in which differentiated cells arise." (Mead [1934] 1967: 188f)

Thus, Mead emphasizes the historical precedence of social institutions to the individual, which is born into the former. A notion of an individual human being divorced from any

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[120] Melucci (1995: 45) wants to introduce a third feature of identities, namely "the ability to recognize and to be recognized." This attribute, however, in my view can only apply to individual identities.

[121] Schild (1994: 68), for instance, jumps from a "multiplicity of [feminist] discourses" to the "senses of self [, that] refer to lived subjectivties as contradictory" (*ibid.*, 74).

society becomes meaningless to him.[122] The basic unit of social systems in Mead's terminology is the "self". In simple terms, one can describe the emergence of "self" as follows: It is through the "generalized other," which consists of the organized community the (physiological) individual perceives him- or herself to be located in, each person obtains his unity of "self" (Mead [1934] 1967: 154). To react adequately to this social environment the individual has to take on the different perspectives of the human beings he interacts with (*ibid*., p. 160), which is accomplished by the creation of a "me," i.e. the organized group of attitudes towards the individual taken over from the interaction partners (Habermas [1981] 1995b: 92; Mead [1934] 1967: 194). However, the "self" does not only take on the rôles of others, but also reacts towards them. Mead terms that response as "I" (Mead [1934] 1967: 175). The "I" will, in turn, be evaluated in terms of adequacy from the standpoint of a "me" at a later point in time,[123] which leads to a readjustment of the actions of the self. Every self in the interaction process undergoes the above described development, which then leads to a series of readjustments, in which the self becomes shaped (Habermas [1981] 1995b: 28f).

With respect the conceptualization of identity, I propose the following amendments of Mead's theory: Collective identities operate on the level of the "generalized other". With *inter alia* their help the "I" constructs the "me," which in essence constitutes the individual identity.

This model of the relationships between individual, individual identity and collective identity entails these important consequences.

> *Conjecture 3-1*: Collective identity is ultimately the product of the interaction of individuals.[124]

> *Corollary 3-1*: Those collective identities that enjoy superior credibility across individuals and those that serve preferred objectives of the individual are particularly viable.

Consider now the widespread assumption, that in modernity the construction of individual identity becomes problematic.[125] Individual identity becomes decoupled from traditional

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[122] Note, that this might be interpreted as an epistemological axiom, rather than an empirically falsifiable hypothesis (see also Luhmann).

[123] The past "I," or better: the memory of the "I," becomes a "me" in the course of time. The present "I" can never be full conscious of itself (Mead [1934] 1967: 174).

[124] The temporal precedence of social institutions should not be misleading here, since the very same institutions have historically been constructed by (no longer existent) individuals. Cf. Berger & Luckmann (1980 [1967]) for a credible account of this process.

rôles and the individuals are faced with the task to create a stable, autonomous identity for themselves, which, ultimately results in the modern strife for "authenticity" (Berger, Berger & Kellner 1973). Then, "there is, therefore, a sort of 'social demand' for […] 'objective' foundations of collective identities." (Bauman 1992: 696) The dominance of primordially coded collective identities seemingly stable over time supports this hypothesis.[126] Let me be clear, though. Contrary to prejudices that many leftists cherishing multiculturalism share with ethno-nationalists, the strife for stable personal identity is by no means a n e c e s s a r y o r   m o r a l l y   d e s i r a b l e component of modern society. Those, who ask rhetorically,

> "[w]ouldn't a liberated humanity […] require s t a b l e   i d e n t i t i e s , social roles, and normative constraints," (Seidman 1993: 129, emphasis mine)

should consider following answer:

> "I know of no good reason to believe that a firm and stable identity is under all circumstances preferable to the opposite — presumable an unstable and flexible (or even flabby) one. These days, a firm identity often seems to express itself as pig-headedness, and a stable one as smug or stubborn rigidity. In a rapidly changing society which continuously confronts persons to new situations to which one must adapt, a flexible unstable identity seems like a very useful thing to command — however offensive such plasticity of personality may seem to those thinkers intellectually bred on psychiatric euphemisms for 'strength' of character." (Berger 1971: 96)

The current popularity of the identity quest thesis in both sociology and society might very well not reflect an innate quest for identity, but instead be rooted in the masterframe of liberal individualism (Berger 1971: 96). Either way, though, we arrive at:

> *Observation 3-1*: Primordially coded collective identities enjoy superior cultural resonances in modernity.

There exists still another firmly established correlate to the origin of identities in communicative interaction.

> *Corollary 3-2*: Common collective experiences can facilitate the formation of a collective identity (Fantasia 1988; Marx Ferree 1992: 35; Piven & Cloward 1977: 21).

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[125] Berger/Berger/Kellner (1973: 77-80) are the pioneers of this hypothesis, which, concomitantly, disposes of the thoughtful objection that most "rôle theories" postulate an individual somewhat independent from his/her rôles (Calhoun 1994: 13). Only in modernity the autonomous individual has become an empirically adequate model, but not an ontological entity.

[126] There are other, in my view more important, reasons for this finding, which are discussed below.

In summary, collective identity is a specific frame that enables collective action. It is generated through the interaction of individuals differently equipped to construct frames. Before moving to the explanatory factors of collective identity, let me extend on the observation that primordial identities are currently in demand with the help of an a typology of collective identities.

A Typology of Collective Identities

Consider next the typology of collective identity building processes proposed by Eisenstadt and Giesen (1995: 72-85). Although their approach attempts to cover all collective identity building processes, I think, it is particularly useful for the analysis of collective identities that emphasize *la mêmete* of the ingroup over longer temporal periods. This focus on sameness of communities over time by the way has its correlate in their successful primordialization, which renders their distinctiveness largely unproblematic.

Eisenstadt and Giesen develop three ideal types of collective identity construction: primordialism, traditionalism, and the formation of an identity with reference to its special relation to the sacred. Primordialist identity codes appear as nature to the vast majority of the audience. Racist interpretations of nationhood constitute the most parsimonious example of primordialist elements of national identity packages. Biological interpretations of the gender category are equally compelling. Traditionalist identity markers on the other hand emphasize the temporal continuity of la mêmete. Despite considerable shifts in membership patterns, organizational forms and goals the women's movement, for instance, frequently and successfully evokes its predecessor in the 19th century, with whom it merely shares the name.[127] Finally, there is the special relation of the collectivity to the sacred that is, of course not necessarily consciously, utilized to solidify a collective identity. This type of identity formation does not necessarily appeal to what is commonly labeled religion, but might equally refer to secular "eternal" institutions, such as "progress" or science. New Age seems to draw heavily on codes of this type: There are numerous references to both Western science and Eastern religion.

According to Eisenstadt and Giesen all three ideal types entail elective affinities to specific forms of relationships between individuals and/or groups, both inside and outside the

demarcated collectivity. Primordialism is coupled with ingroup egalitarianism, while at the same time their boundaries remain virtually impermeable for outsiders.

Conversely, traditionalist codifications allow for temporal permeability, but simultaneously promote hierarchical relationships within the ingroup: The more one complies with traditions marking the boundaries, the more one is located at the center of the collectivity. Commemorative rituals that frequently relate to mythical origins of the collectivity, such as "founding fathers" or "historic" events like revolutions or, preferably, battles, enhance the collective identity markers of the traditionalist type (Giesen 1996: 12).

Finally, collective identity codes that rely on a presumed special relation of the collectivity to the sacred display universalistic tendencies (*ibid*., p. 9-11). Although they usually imply notions of "laity" and "clergy" as hierarchical subgroups of the ingroup, they therefore seem to qualify best for the establishment of emerging collective identities, who still require an enlargement of their constituency. However, it is exactly the potential universality, which puts them on the fringes of most identities and exposes them to threat of becoming traditionalized.[128]

One might amend this threefold typology and treat primordialist markers as an idealtypical subtype of the traditionalist species, which simply stretches the imagined temporal continuity of a group to ahistoricity. In fact, most codes that have been identified by Eisenstadt and Giesen as "traditionalist" lead actually in the same direction. Commemorative rituals that appeal to historical events that happened centuries ago — e.g., *1789, 1776, Kosovo Polje 1389*, or, for that matter, *centuries of patriarchy* — mark identities that f o r a l l p r a c t i c a l p u r p o s e s entail primordialist qualities. At the same time, formally traditionalist markers avoid the naturalist narratives of identities discredited by fascism. Hence, formally traditionalist codes might in substance turn out as primordialist codings directed at an audience that for whatever reasons is not perceptive towards formal primordialism.

> "[Traditionally coded n]ationalism, one may say, is a racism of the intellectuals (and, obversely, racism is the nationalism of the masses; the masses are, virtually by definition, objects of somebody else's choices, products rather than producers,

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[127] Cf., e.g., Hervé (1983: 11), who claims that "a history of the German women's movement that does justice to its diversity, its social context and its c o n t i n u i t y is still missing." Obviously, she takes its continuity (since 1848!) for granted.

[128] Giesen (1996: 25) argues *La France Révolutionnaire* has been traditionalized.

weather the determining forces are genes or the legally fixed narratives of the powers that be. The 'belonging' appears to the masses, therefore, as something given and complete, matter-of-factly and non-negotiable; most certainly, as something that cannot be changed.)" (Bauman 1992: 686)

In contrast, "genuinely" traditionalist national identity markers, i.e. those markers that really permit boundary crossings, are usually viewed as being s e c o n d a r y or even derivatives of more primordialist markers. German identity as marked by the *Wirtschaftswunder* was seen as made possible by *Preußische Sekundärtugenden* [Prussian Virtues]. It surely did e x c l u d e latecomers such as *Aussiedler* [immigrants of "ethnic German" origin] and even succeeded in the traditionalist-primordial creation of a West German identity, which to some extent became even resilient to the state-sponsored inclusion of East Germans thirty years later. The inclusion of Turkish guest workers some (Giesen 1996: 17) believe to have happened remains to be empirically demonstrated. In conclusion, it seems that traditionalist codes over time become "primordialized."

   To arrive at a more adequate conceptualization of the development of different types of codes, I propose to correlate Eisenstadt and Giesen's threefold typology of f o r m s of collective identity codes with "two realms of c o n t e n t — one 'naturalized' and taken for granted, the other contested terrain with collective actors offering competing interpretations" (Gamson et al. 1992: 375). Primordialist codes are by definition "naturalized." Both universalist and traditionalist codes might acquire a taken-for-grantedness. Obviously, such development has taken place in the case of "quasi-primordial" traditionalist codes. "Pure" traditional and universalist codes, which by definition display permeable boundaries allow for a high membership volatility, are much less likely to become taken for granted. The temporal change then poses a formidable obstacle for naturalization. Thus, as will be elaborated below, it might even be that an evolutionary propensity for collective identities to become primordially or quasi-primordial traditionally coded exists.

Explanatory Variables

So, how do collective identities become constructed? In the first part of this section, factors endogenous to ideological dynamics — depicted by the large oval at the bottom of Figure 3-1 — are discussed. It will be shown that no unitary discourse for collective identities exists, but instead different framings bolstered by different actors interact in the production of collective identities. Which framings become particularly successful, i.e., which frames are most

"believable" depends on the internal structure of the frame, as well as on the legitimacy of the carriers of the frame. But framings do not only have their own dynamics, exogenous factors equally are important for the development of frames. These factors are discussed in second part of this section. Figure 3-1 visualizes the most important "tangible" factors for identity development with the boxes left from "collective identity type." The organizational form of a movement is most directly tied to its collective identity, as the latter is to some extent a projection of the former. Organizational form itself is largely determined through the class position of the movement's constituency. The class position of movement entrepreneurs directly influences the organizational structures, while the type of rank-and-file recruitment largely depends on the class position of potential recruits. As different mobilization strategies require different organizational carriers, rank-and-file membership influences organizational structure mediated by differential recruitment paths.

Identity Discourses

Who is involved in the construction of identities? Which are the tools that are used in these construction processes?

Identity Fields

Many studies on identity focus solely on intra-movement discourses in their discussion of collective identity, although, clearly, the identity of a movement is always also negotiated with its environment (Eyerman & Jamison 1991b: 117). It is therefore more useful to chart the cognitive territory of a movement through a mapping of its *identity field*. In this field, one can distinguish three groups that engage in identity construction:

> "First, there are those individuals and collectivities who are identified as protagonists in that they advocate or sympathize with movement values, beliefs, goals, and practices, or are the beneficiaries of movement action. Second, there are other persons and collectivities who are seen as standing in opposition to the protagonists' efforts, and are thus identified as antagonists. Third, still others are perceived as audiences in the sense that they are neutral or uncommitted observers, even though some of them may respond or report on the events they observe." (Hunt, Benford & Snow 1994: 186)[129]

As resource mobilization theory has taught us, though, not all actors of the identity field have the same "bargaining power" in identity constructions. Mass media are considered the most influential actors in this respect.

Framing Processes

How do the agents of collective identity building processes in practice (consciously or not) produce collective identity? To answer this question, one needs first to realize that not all possible identities enjoy the same viability. Identities cannot be constructed from scratch, but presuppose already existing symbolic codes of distinction (Eisenstadt & Giesen 1995: 74; Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 2; McAdam 1994: 41-43; Snow & Benford 1988: 204; Somers & Gibson 1994: 73). The processes through which identity frames are generated and modified are still best analyzed through the tools that Snow and his collaborators have developed more than a decade ago in their now famous article on frame alignment processes (Snow et al. 1986).[130] They distinguish between *frame extension*, *frame amplification*, *frame transformation* and *frame bridging*.

The most basic method of frame transformation is *frame amplification*. Frame amplification simply denotes "the clarification and invigoration of an interpretative frame that bears on a particular issue, problem or set of events" (Snow et al. 1986: 469). Since frame amplification applies only to already existing frames, it can only be utilized for frame maintenance, but not for the construction of new frames. Thus, frame amplification takes place only at later stages of collective identity building, when a collective identity is already firmly instituted. Frame amplification primarily promotes the allegiance of participants to their movements. Antagonists can also fortify the identity of their targets by delivering a strong "negative" identity (Della Porta 1991: 57; Gamson 1992b: 135; Rucht 1991a: 9). However, at the onset of a movement its collective identity frame is not yet salient enough to serve as a counterframe (Rucht 1991a: 14, no. 8; Zald & Useem 1987: 257). Frame amplification, of course, can also be reversed, which would mean a blurring of a frame, or the display of its remoteness from particular issues, problems or events. New Age almost always faces frame weakening, most movement outsiders emphasize the ambiguous quality of the movement (see chapter 5), and movement insiders are either unwilling or incapable to successfully employ frame amplification techniques. We shall see that such frame weakening

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[129] For a more detailed mapping of the identity field, consult Johnston (1995: 237f and Figure 11.2).

[130] Jasper & Goodwin (1999: 47ff) have bemoaned that the framing concept contains a rationalist bias and is insufficient to capture the ubiquity of cultural processes. It is correct that some framing theorists seem to have forgotten that framing is a constantly ongoing process, as questions as to "*when* will "framing work" occur and *how* will it be sustained" (Jenness 1995: 159) imply. But by no means are such biases endemic to framing theory.

does not affect its survival, which depends on continuos recruitment of new movement participants. However, it does curtail the propensity of New Age to engage in collective action proper, which requires a strong identification of movement participants with their movement.

Unlike frame amplification, *frame bridging*, i.e. the "linkage of two or more ideologically congruent, but structurally unconnected frames," (Snow et al. 1986: 467) is a technique *par excellence* in the construction of emergent collective identities. Snow and his allies rather narrowly refer to intentional frame bridging between particular issues and organization vehicles of movements (Benford 1987: 118; Snow et al. 1986: 467ff), but frame bridging can also refer to the connection of mere ideational elements. That is the case in frame extensions. *Frame extension*, as I interpret it, is a subvariety of frame bridging, which incorporates hitherto unconnected ideational elements into a frame.

Frame transformation or *keying*, as the last framing technique had originally been labeled, refers the process, in which a "set of conventions by which a given act[s…], already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this act[s] but seen by the participants to be quite something else." (Goffman 1974: 44) With respect to collective identity codes this means, for instance, that formerly traditionalist codes become primordialized. As I have already pointed out, I hypothesize that successful collective identities entail the "propensity" to shift from universalist to traditional and from traditional to primordialist or quasi-primordialist codings. This "propensity" should be interpreted in an evolutionary fashion.

Narrative Fidelity and Empirical Credibility

Regardless of the employed framing techniques, some frames are more valuable for collective identity than others. Without citing any concrete empirical evidence, Melucci (1992: 133f), for instance, claims that all (successful) movement identities contain a regressive utopia that points towards an atemporal golden age, during which the movement goals were implemented.[131] In his analysis of the peace movement organizations in Texas, Benford (1987: 124) has found reference to democracy, freedom, liberty, and patriotism "in nearly every movement group analyzed." Frames that are extensions or transformations of

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[131] Gusfield (1990: 91) in my view rightfully criticizes Melucci for not making his empirical data accessible to the English speaking audience.

already established other frames enjoy a high viability (Snow et al. 1986: 467; Taylor & Whittier 1992: 111). It is thus important to identify frames whose integration into an emerging collective identity increases its viability.

The most promising approach to assess the viability of a frame is to examine its *narrative fidelity* and *empirical credibility* (Koopmans 1999: 105). Since individuals ultimately decide on the plausibility of a frame, it seems reasonable to assume *narrative fidelity*, i.e. the congruence of an identity frame with the life experience of its addressees (Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 5 Oberschall 1996: 99; Piven & Cloward 1977: 20f; Snow et al. 1986: 477). Herein may lie the weakness of many New Age frames, as these are frequently disconnected from adherents' life experience, an observation that, in fact, is more in line with earlier mass society theory that predicts that extra-institutional actors rely on behavior "remote from personal experience and daily life" (Kornhauser [1959] 1960: 43). Although the identity and collective action frames of the new social movements are much closer related to the everyday experience of its constituency, even here the connection between everyday life and viable frames are by no means unequivocal. For instance, it is difficult to see, how an invisible risk such as radioactivity has entered unmediatedly everyday life of any anti-nuclear movement.

Even if individuals cannot directly relate an identity frame to their personal experiences, *empirical credibility* — the fit between a frame and real world events — plays a major role in the acceptance of a frame (D'Anjou 1996: 56; Neidhardt & Rucht 1993: 309; Snow & Benford 1988: 208). Naturally, this credibility must not be interpreted as "objective" empirical adequacy.[132] Rather, it denotes the ease with which the "I" reconciles a frame with what she or he considers her or his unmediated experiences.

Since personal experiences are psychological and social constructions, Snow and his associates have rightfully shifted their concept of narrative fidelity more towards the ideational realm. They contend that there are frames that "resonate with cultural narration, that is with stories, myths, and folk tales that are part and parcel of one's cultural heritage." (Snow & Benford 1988: 210; also quoted in Gamson [1992b: 135]) Such frames have been called *metanarratives* (Somers 1995: 255-257). The strength of metanarratives lies in their

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[132] Cf. Gamson (1992a: 69f) with respect to the problematique of a positivist interpretation of the credibility criterion.

capacity to move beyond empirical scrutiny (Gamson et al. 1992). One reason for the salience of such frames in modernity might be that seemingly enduring frames that cannot be shaken by empirical "counter-evidence" enable the individual to construct a viable "me." The use of "condensing symbols" derived from these enduring "cultural themes," then is essential for the success of a collective identity and its corresponding collective action (Gamson 1988: 220).[133]

Masterframes

If metanarratives are critical for identity building, the task of the researcher becomes to identify empirical instances of metanarratives, i.e. *masterframes* (McAdam 1994: 41-43) or, more enduring *cultural themes* (Gamson 1988: 220, 227). That is easier said than done, though. Benford (1997: 410f) duly criticizes that students of social movements have produced a long "laundry list" of frames without making much theoretical headway. This pile of frames is of little help, as long as nothing has been said about different qualities of the frames in question.[134]

The most convincing attempt to identify masterframes can be found in Gamson (1992b: chapter 8). Gamson distinguishes four enduring cultural themes on technology, power, dependence, and nationalism. Each of these themes opens opportunities for keyings on two opposing masterframes (*ibid.*, 135) such as *progress through technology* and *harmony with nature* (*ibid.*, 136f) in the case of technology themes. If one conflates Gamson's power and dependence themes, one can obtain three masterframes that reoccur frequently in the literature. Two of these frames, called here *liberal individualism* and *ethno-nationalism*, are directly connected to the most powerful collective actor in modernity, the modern nation state. The third masterframe avoids to examine existing power relationships altogether by concealing the social construction processes through a definition of social phenomena as being part of a natural order. This frame has been dubbed *harmony with nature* (Gamson 1992b: 136).

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[133] Similarly: Berger & Luckmann (1980 [1967]: 33-36).

[134] Partly the complacency to stop the i d e a t i o n a l analysis of framings at the descriptive level may be rooted in the conception, that frames in themselves are particular accomplishments of social movements. Questions such as, "when will 'framing work' occur and how will it be sustained," (Jenness 1995: 159) reveal that some movement scholars have silently, but radically departed from Goffman's (1974) original notion that framing is a constantly ongoing process.

The dominant ideology of modern state and society is liberal individualism. The *American Dream*, Western democracy, market economy, the civil rights movement and the academy all have drawn on the liberalism frame. At the core of this masterframe is the image of humans beings as rationally acting individuals. It is liberalism that has made possible the modern ego-identity (Berger 1971: 97; Habermas 1974: 91ff). Liberalism's strong emphasis of the individual as an ontological entity is probably a far more important cause for the current strife for identity than the modern organization of society. At the interface between group and individual, liberalism stresses the right for free association. In contrast, groups that are created through forced membership — such as allegedly some New Age "cults" — are emphatically illegitimate for liberalism. There is one exception, though, namely the ascriptive group.

Ascriptive groups are at the core of the second masterframe, ethno-nationalism, which has been intimately intertwined with liberalism during the rise of the nation state.

> "Nationalism is the cultural framework of modernity; it is its main cultural mechanism of integration, and therefore, construction. It is the order-creating cognitive system which invests with meaning, and as a result shapes, our social reality, or the cognitive medium, the prism through which modern society sees this reality." (Greenfeld 1999: 39)

Nationalism supposes the existence of primordial groups, which are viewed just as much as ontological as are liberalism's' individuals.

As the "dominant perception of the political context" constitutes a masterframe (Diani 1996: 1057), it should not come as a surprise that ethno-nationalism and liberalism are masterframes. After all, with the rise of the modern nation state primordialized national citizenship identity has become a masterframe institutionalized on state and inter-state level as well as in the scientific community.[135] Once a primordialist identity for the organization that (by definition) shall override most other allegiances, namely the state and civil society as its presumed originator, is adopted, all primordially coded identities acquire a strong legitimatory advantage. Essentialist identity codes, obtained via "frame transformation" or

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[135] That nation states promote the nationality principle shows Anderson's (1983) elaboration on "official" nationalism as well as Billig's (1995) insightful analysis of "cold" nationalism. For impact of inter-state nationalism, cf. Barkin & Cronin (1994: 126, 128); Brubaker & Laitin (1998: 425); Calhoun (1995: 253); Hobsbawm (1990: 97f); Soysal (1996: 11f, 16f). With respect to the scientific community, see my own discussion of primordialist and structuralist approaches to national identity (pp. 66ff) as well as Billig's analysis of Richard Rorty's nationalism. Finally, cf. Brubaker (1999) and Soysal (1994: 5) for the dominant melange of national and citizenship identity in scientific discourse.

"frame extension," already have become prevalent in public discourse (Gitlin 1994: 153). Queer and gender politics have become essentialized to an extent that is worth their comparison with the classic ethnicities (Duggan 1992; Epstein 1994; Kimmel 1993). Calls for i n d i v i d u a l rights become vocalized around primordialized g r o u p identities, a paradox that has even acquired legitimacy among sociologists (e.g.,Melucci 1989: 90; Soysal 1996: 17). In addition, national citizenship identity does not only provide a blueprint for successful collective identities, but elements of national identity might themselves enter movement identities and thereby enhance a frame's survival potential.[136]

The third masterframe, *harmony with nature*, does not enjoy direct state support, but it also makes claims for primordiality. This frame posits that there is an inherent order in nature that one should avoid to imbalance with technological means (Gamson 1992b: 137). *Harmony with nature* is less suited for the construction of collective identities, because nature — except when interpreted in a racist or sexist way — is a universalist concept, while group distinctions are by definition particularistic. Instead, *harmony with nature* can only be used as a device to legitimize particular ideological assumptions associated with certain collective identities.

Explanatory Variables

The influence of above ideational variables is always mediated by more tangible variables such as resources and organizations (Eisenstadt & Giesen 1995: 76; Hunt, Benford & Snow 1994: 188). Ultimately, that places the focus on the social origins of the movement constituency.

Resources and Organization

As resources and organizations are also symbolic representations, they are always also a symbol for the collective identity of movement. At the same time, the more tangible structures of an organization, i.e. communication channels, membership lists, organization offices, etc., have a direct effect on identity discourses. As a result social inequalities, individuals are therefore differently equipped for identity construction processes. Most likely, they the resulting power differential will be utilized to strengthen certain identities.

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[136] For instance, the national branches of the international peace movement have relied nationalist frame extension (Rochon 1990=: 110). Eder (1985b: 879) draws parallels between all new social movements and nationalist romanticism.

Constructionist accounts nevertheless frequently lack an analysis of power relationships and social inequalities (Bartholomew & Mayer 1992: 148).[137] Fortunately, resource mobilization theory can fill this gap insofar as the same resources that are critical for mobilizations are also relevant in identity construction processes. Differential access to these resources therefore characterizes power differentials.

But resources and organizations do not only influence the manner, how identities are constructed and who does the construction, but also impact the content of identities (Clemens 1996: 205). There is a tendency towards isomorphic organizational and ideational structures of movements. Movements that contain numerous relatively independent groups can more easily deal with more ambiguous and therefore fuzzier identities, as an organizational separation of members with contradictory assumptions on the collective identities of the movement do not need to confront each other (Carden 1978: 187). Vice versa, movements or other collective actors which rely on strong unitary organizations will establish seemingly more hardened identities. New Age is certainly a movement of the former kind, while the nation state is probably the most extreme example of the latter one. Somewhat inbetween we find collectivities like the women's movement, which are rooted in a multitude of grassroots groups, but also command over umbrella organizations.

Not only quantity and size of movement organizations inform the construction of collective identity, so do their quality. Movements such as the new social movements, whose primary organizational form is the non-profit voluntary association, can much more readily recur to exclusionary identities than movements such as New Age, whose organizations are mostly business enterprises, which need to attract as many customers as possible.

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[137] Some authors claim that "modern society no longer has a 'top' (e.g. a power elite or the state)." (Halfmann & Japp 1993: 430). Others, surrendering to the complexity of power relationships, have disbanded power analysis as in feasible in the first place:

> "As for power, the problem is [...] to find it: it is difficult to say if it is disseminated in numberless ganglia of complex systems, democratically participated in by masses, reflected in infinite images by the mirrors of the mass-media or if it has simply vanished as a result of rarification: power - principle of opposition but also identification for every movements ideology - has disappeared from the social scene like a thief from the scene of his crime." (Sassoon 1984: 862).

To stay in the metaphor, it is one central task for the sociologist to play detective and catch the thief, thereby rendering power structures visible.

Social Structural Variables

Which organizational form is selected and which types of resources are available for the construction process is therefore a question of the social origin of the movement constituency. Most new social movement activists stem from the "new middle classes," and are as intellectuals closely related to academia and polity, which grants them a legitimation advantage (Brand 1987: 42; Dalton, Kuechler & Bürklin 1990: 7; Eder 1985b: 874ff; Eyerman & Jamison 1991b: 94; Gamson [1975] 1990b: 160 Jenkins 1983: 538f; Klandermans 1991: 27; McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987: 37; Offe 1985: 828f; Olson [1982] 1985: 32; Pinard & Hamilton 1989: 82; Rochon 1988: 16f; Zald & McCarthy [1975] 1987: 97, 109). Additionally, they can recur to dense networks and institutional resources, which enables them to build voluntary associations as movement carriers.

In contrast, New Agers are usually formally less educated and cannot rely on already existing dense networks among themselves. Nor do they know institutions, in which their groups can initially form. Consequently, New Age entrepreneurs had to found private enterprises to create movement organizations. As the following chapters will show, these developments have hampered the impact of New Age on larger society.

4 DATA

The data analyzed in this study stem from a variety of sources. During the summer of 1996, I began my empirical research with a small exploratory study of New Age organizations in Southern California and Northern Arizona. In that field study, data on the question, by which literature is New Age is characterized, were *inter alia* collected. According to the data obtained in this study, a sample of monographs and magazines relevant to New Age was created and examined with the goal of mapping New Age's internal discourses. The bulk of my empirical research, though, concerns bystander publics. To capture their discourses, a content analysis of articles from seven major newspapers and two magazines from the US and Europe was conducted. These three data sources were supplemented with data on protagonist and antagonist discourses collected on the internet and usenet. The consultation of government reports rounds up the empirical research. Let me describe these data in more detail.

Exploratory Field Study

Upon entering the field in the summer of 1996, I undertook a survey of New Age organizations in Southern California (mainly San Diego county) and Northern Arizona (Sedona/Cottonwood area). In early 1997, additional organizations in the Southern Wisconsin area were added to this sample. I also examined the *New Age, spirituality*, and *occultism* sections of 33 bookstores in San Diego.

Although the selection of the sampling areas was to some degree a matter of (geographical) convenience, it was also guided by theoretical rationales. San Diego County was chosen to cover one large Metropolitan area in the US state with the highest density of New Agers. The Sedona/Cottonwood area in Northern Arizona represents a rural town, whose proximity to allegedly supernatural phenomena — in this case a number of magnetic vortices — has caused a substantial number of New Agers to relocate to the location in question. We can thus expect the most committed movement members to come from this area. Finally, Dane County, Wisconsin represents a Midwestern town with no extraordinary exposure to New Age. The choice of these three areas controls for differing social opportunity structures. In particular, differing opportunities based on the geographical density of New Agers (high in Sedona, low in Wisconsin), the maturity of the movement (long established in San Diego, comparatively new in Wisconsin), the expected commitment

of participants (highest in Sedona), pre-existing grassroots networks (strongest in the Wisconsin college town) have been captured. It turned out that none of these factors affected the basic structure New Age organizations, as all relevant variable distributions were surprisingly uniform across the three locations.

The sampling universe was delineated by the entries in the categories *Spirituality*, *Psychics*, *Books - New*, *Books - Used and Out of Print* of the respective local phone company's yellow pages. These results have been cross-examined with entries in the *National New Age Yellow Pages* (Ingenito 1992) and advertisements in the local New Age stores. Most (112 out of 164) of the thereby obtained organizations were service businesses such as channeling practitioners. Initial phone interviews revealed that these enterprises were usually specializing in a specific current of New Age. As the identity of the entire movement was of interest, the focus shifted towards bookstores and New Age retail stores, which cover a broader range of New Age practices. My sample of these stores initially comprised 21 New Age and 33 bookstores in San Diego County, 7 stores in Wisconsin's Dane County, and 13 stores in the Sedona area. Later, additional New Age stores in the Los Angeles area, among them the most famous *Bodhi Tree Bookstore*, and the only store of this kind found in Berlin, Germany, were added to the sample.

For each outlet, a questionnaire was completed determining the kind of services or merchandise offered, gender and age of the persons affiliated with the enterprise, personnel size, symbols displayed, and the kind of background music played. After I had collected data on the books and magazines carried by ten stores, a list of the 67 most frequently carried authors and the 78 magazines was drawn up. This questionnaire, which can be found in the appendix, then was used in the examination of the remaining stores. Finally, a few qualitative interviews with some New Age practitioners were conducted.

Access to the Field

Despite the fact that most New Age oriented stores I visited were small, private for-profit businesses, which could be expected to be secretive about their management techniques, access to the field turned out to be extremely easy. Only in one, unusually large (eight employees) and professionally led New Age store I was not immediately permitted to conduct my survey. Even there, after my assurances of being a researcher from Europe with no affiliation with any competitor, I could ultimately persuade the owner to cooperate. In

most stores, however, the salespersons were very open to all questions and frequently offered additional advice without being asked.

One of the most important reasons for the ease with which access to the field could be secured is the extremely inclusive identity of New Age. Despite my insistence on being a sociologist detached from movement ideology, most storekeepers considered me a prospective "convert" or even maintained throughout our interaction that I was already a New Ager. To be sure, these attitudes can be partially explained by the drive to acquire customers, but the tenacity with which the view of myself being a New Age protagonist was upheld despite repeated testimony to the contrary, also testifies to highly permeable movement boundaries.

Newspaper Data

As the major part of this thesis is a frame analysis of the identity field of New Age, it was necessary to obtain data on the discourses on New Age. One possible way to obtain such data is to resort to media discourses, which to some extent mirror everyday discourses. As the decision to collect newspaper data for these purposes will be justified in some more detail in chapter 7, I will here only present a brief overview over the descriptive properties of the newspaper data set.

Newspaper	Covered Time Period	Number of Articles	Sole Focus on New Age
Christian Science Monitor	1980-1996[*]	65	6
Los Angeles Times	1986-1996[*]	590	85
New York Times	1971-1996[*]	392	48
San Diego Union-Tribune	1984-1996[*]	337	46
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung	1994	24	2
Neue Zürcher Zeitung	1995-1997	26	0
Süddeutsche Zeitung	1992-1996	23	4
die tageszeitung	1994	26	2
Newsweek	1984-1996[*]	54	9
Time	1986-1996[*]	52	7
Total		1589	209

Table 4-1 Composition of Newspaper Article Sample

Data Universe and Sample Properties

Altogether I collected data from ten different papers and magazines. *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine* (FAZ), *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *die tageszeitung* (taz), and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* were selected as nationally circulating papers. Except for the *taz*, all these papers are long established broadsheets with an elite audience (Merrill & Fisher 1980). The relatively novel *taz* sprang up from the new social movements and, thus, also caters to an audience with high cultural and material capital. Los Angeles Times and San Diego Union-Tribune as representatives of local newspapers are accessed by a more diverse audience. Time and Newsweek represent weekly magazines, and, therefore — together with the Christian Science Monitor — publish more background reporting, an important quality for New Age, which is low on "newsworthy" events. Although it would have been desirable to include in the sample yellow press papers such as *National Inquirer* or *Bild Zeitung*, which not only attain unsurpassed circulation numbers, but also reach into different population strata, time and cost restraints prevented me from doing so. In any case,

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[*] From 1986 onwards, even years only.

it has been demonstrated that even the contents of television programs, which enjoy a yet more widespread distribution, do not radically differ from the broadsheet press (Gitlin 1980: 301), a fact that somewhat mediates the elite bias.

All sampled articles with the exception of those from *taz* and *FAZ*, whose CD-ROMs have been searched, have been obtained from the *Lexis/Nexis* database. As I relied exclusively on machine readable data, only limited time periods of the papers in question are covered. For the 1970s, only *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, *Newsweek* are available in the *Lexis/Nexis* database. Even these papers are not covered in full over this period, which prompted me to analyze the 58 obtained articles only qualitatively. For the years from 1980 onward, a machine readable data set was created. Records in this data set represent articles from *Lexis/*Nexis that were retrieved through a full search of all newspaper articles that contained the words new and age next to each other, while the CD-ROMs were searched for articles containing "New Age" or were related to *Esoterik*.[138] Table 4-1, which lists the number of articles analyzed from each paper, shows that the number of articles varies strongly across the different sources. This variation is partly due to actual coverage differences, as weeklies publish fewer articles than dailies and German language papers are less concerned with New Age than their American counterparts. To a large extent, however, volume differences stem from availability differentials of the media in the electronic sources. In particular, the German language periodicals were — at the time the data set was created (1997) — available on electronic files only for limited time periods in the 1990s. In contrast, data for the American media became so abundant in the mid 1980s, I decided to cover these media only during even years from 1986 onwards.

Variable Vector

The collected articles then needed to undergo a coding procedure for further analysis. Unfortunately, this is no parsimonious endeavor when it comes to frame analysis. What was most regrettable in Goffman's (1974) original formulation of frame analysis, was the lack of a codification of the actual research process (Gamson 1975a: 606). Although the situation has

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[138] The actual search term has been NEW W/1 AGE. This search, of course, yields a large number of articles, that were completely unrelated to New Age, as it is the case with articles, where new age simply denotes a new era — e.g., "a new age in Soviet-American relations" — or, when "new age" is simply a part of a longer phrase — e.g., "new age limits for drinking." To accelerate the exclusion of these articles, at a second level all articles containing the search terms ISRAEL, SOVIET, AGE W/1 LIMIT, AGE W/1 LIMITS, BEVERAGE were dropped, even if this probably has meant the exclusion of a few articles appropriate for the present research.

since improved, frame analysis is still in dire need of systematization (Johnston 1995: 217). In particular, an elaborate identification of appropriate coding procedures is underdeveloped. The only step into this direction I found is a presentation the reliability scores for codings of frames (Gamson 1992c: 200f), but unfortunately even this study does not reveal, how the author arrived at the coding categories in the first place.

With these problems in mind, after reviewing one hundred articles I established several categories of *framing devices* (Ullrich 1998). These devices are fairly unequivocal speech patterns that render the presence of a frame recognizable to the minds of the audience. Of course, as framing devices are decoded in individual minds, their impact depends heavily on skills and knowledge base of the recipients. Thus, as far as data collection is concerned, researchers' minds just like any other individuals' minds heavily influence the data. A venue to render data collection more transparent under such circumstances is to identify in a first step a set of framing devices and define them as unambiguously as possible. In a second step the researcher then analyzes each record (here: each newspaper article) with respect to the presence or absence of these framing device. When the presence of the frame has been identified, the researcher indicates key phrases that according to her/his interpretation signal the framing device. After the complete data set has been analyzed, then the joint set of these keywords is created, and subsequently the data set is reanalyzed quantitatively with the help of those character sequences that denote the key phrases in question.

Let me give you an example. The *charismatic leader* framing device has been defined as unequivocal reference to the charismatic power of a person over a collectivity. Its operationalization according to the above outlined procedure was to code this frame as present, if one of the following character sequences (or their German language equivalents) were present in the article: GURU, DEVOTEE, CHARLATAN, or HUCKSTER.

This procedure certainly does not absolve the researcher from interpretative tasks, but it does make the identification of frames more easily replicable. In addition, it also renders data on frames to some extent quantifiable. In chapter 6.4.1, all framing devices that have been identified this way are presented.

Beside the recording of the existing framing devices, a number of other variables were recorded for each article. It was coded if the topic of an article was exclusively on New Age or one of its currents, or if it contained substantial portions that dealt explicitly with New Age, or if New Age was simply mentioned as an illustration of an unrelated problem. If the

latter was the case, the salience of the frame employed for New Age was considered higher, as there were no explicit elaborations of the frame in question. Table 4-1 shows, that the number of articles that are concerned with New Age as their core topic is relatively low.

The small percentage of articles exclusively dedicated to New Age suggests to consider New Age events not newsworthy. This trend will be supported even further by the data in another variable, in which the position of New Age stories inside the paper has been recorded. In chapter 6.4.1 it will be shown with the help of these statistics that New Age has almost always been relegated to soft news categories, which signal low importance.

Owing to the centrality of organizations in resource mobilization theory, any formal organization that was mentioned to be affiliated with New Age was recorded. With a view on the importance of *la mêmete* for collective identity, any temporal characterization of New Age, be it in the form of an identification of its historical origin or in the form of expectations of its persistence — such as the characterization of New Age as a fad, fashion, or craze — was documented. The latter information, that is, the characterization of New Age's nature — fad, movement, music style, *etc.* — has been stored in an additional variable. Likewise, it has been coded which other collective actors or individual persons were considered related to New Age. Finally, the attitude towards New Age by the author of the article was measured on a five-point Likert scale, from harmful to beneficial, via negative, neutral, and positive. Evidently, this variable contains a strong bias depending on the researcher. Because of this subjective baggage, these data have only been used to complement more easily replicable data.

Of course, not all discourse data can be neatly stored in a variable vector without substantial loss to richness of the discourse. Therefore, the discussion of the frames will also rely on some excerpts from the articles, which are supposed to illustrate the most typical rhetorical figures. In these cases the reader will have to rely on the interpretative skills of the author.

Other Data Sources

Apart from the newspaper data, several other data sources were used to capture New Age discourses. Besides the semi-ethnographic data from the explorative study, three further sources are of particular importance. A number of New Age monographs and magazines were reviewed to capture the internal New Age discourses. Computer mediated communication

data also contributed to the image of the internal discourse, but likewise was used to complement the existing secondary literature on New Age's antagonists, that is, fundamentalist Christians and the anti-cult movement. Finally, a number of recently published reports on new religious movements by Western European governments facilitated the examinations of state positions on New Age.

New Age Literature

As New Age is very much a literary phenomenon, several books by New Age authors as well as New Age magazines have been monitored. Those books that turned up most frequently in my field study, as well as a variety of New Age literature mentioned in the mass media have been examined to gain some 'qualitative" insights into New Age discourses. Six of the analyzed monographs will be reviewed in the following chapter.

Computer Mediated Communication Data

It is certainly true that persons engaging in computer mediated communication have belonged and will belong for some time to come to certain social groups (Nye 1997). Most notably, gender (Hall 1996: 154; Spender 1995; Star 1996: 34f; Sutton 1996: 196) and class (Ito 1996: 25; Star 1996: 43) biases exist, even if a moderate heterogeneity with regards to these criteria has been detected (Brail 1996; Korenman & Wyatt 1996: 231). What is more, computer mediated communication does not replicate everyday life discourses isomorphically (December 1996). However, data from computer mediated communication have the virtue that they do not suffer from the observer's paradox (December 1996: 23; Herring 1996: 5; Newhagen & Rafaeli 1996). In fact, computer mediated communication even tends to be less inhibitive than face to face interaction (Ma 1996: 176ff), which might allow a closer glimpse at selves. Furthermore, computer mediated communication might be a space where emerging identities would first appear, as cyberspace allows experiments with different identities (Robins 1995: 140; Turkle 1997: 1102ff), even though internet identity and real life identity often differ sharply (Morris & Ogan 1996: 53f). Finally, computer mediated communication might lay to a limited extent the foundation for networks (Myers 1994: 253; Star 1996: 40). Keeping these advantages and disadvantages in mind, internet websites and usenet newsgroups have been examined.

Internet Websites

New Age websites have become increasingly common. All major web directories (*Yahoo!*,[139] *Excite*,[140] *Lycos*, [141] *Netscape*[142]) maintain extensive lists dedicated to New Age. On July 12, 1999, Lycos, for instance, lists 310 genuine New Age links in addition to a number of webpages classified as Swedborgian, spiritualist, Neo-Pagan, Wiccan, or other New Age related categories. These links constitute roughly 1.8% of all entries in the wider "Faiths and Beliefs" category. In comparison, according to an extensive survey on beliefs in the United States, only about 0.1‰ of the population identify as New Age (Kosmin & Lachman 1993: 17). Even though the latter figure is likely to underestimate the actual number of New Agers (see chapter 5), it would be difficult to find evidence that would entirely cancel the factor in the magnitude of 200, especially, since many New Age websites might also be found in other categories than New Age. Only the addition of the paganism category, for instance, would increase New Age's share of classified faiths' websites to circa 10%. Thus, New Agers some to be overproportionally active in cyberspace. Following links in *Yahoo!*'s New Age category, a number of these websites were retrieved and examined. Using a snowball technique, several websites by New Age antagonists were also stored and analyzed.

Usenet Newsgroups

Besides chat rooms and multi-user dungeons (MUDs), which both require time synchronized participation for data collection, usenet groups are the most interactive public forums in computer mediated communication. They present an ideal field to gather information on interaction patterns without influencing these patterns (Kollock & Smith 1996: 114).

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[139] <http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Religion/Faiths_and_Practices/New_Age>, October 20, 1997.

[140] <http://www.excite.com/lifestyle/religion_and_beliefs/new_age>, July 12, 1999.

[141] <http://dir.lycos.com/Society/Religion/Faiths_and_Beliefs/New_Age>, July 12, 1999.

[142] <http://directory.netscape.com/Society/Religion/Faiths_and_Beliefs/New_Age>, July 12, 1999.

Newsgroup	Target Group	Mode-rated?	Daily Traffic
talk.religion.newage	New Age	Yes	<100
alt.fan.art-bell	New Age	No	<50
alt.spirituality.circle	New Age	No	<20
misc.religion.newage	New Age	No	<5
rec.music.newage	New Age music	Yes	<50
alt.fan.landmark	est	No	<5
alt.metaphysics.a-a-bailey	Channeling	No	<5
alt.religion.angels	Angels	No	<10
alt.spiritual.enhancement	Traditional Occult	No	<10
sci.skeptic	Skeptics	Yes	<200
alt.support.ex-cult	Anti-Cult Movement	No	<20
alt.mindcontrol	Anti-Cult Movement	No	<200

Table 4-2 Observed Newsgroups

Over the course of two years, I followed a number of newsgroups shown in Table 4-2. Although no formal systematic analysis of the data collected from computer mediated communication has been conducted, these data implicitly bear on my analysis of the movement. At times, data collected on the internet will also empirically substantiate some of the hypotheses in this thesis. At these points the reader will need to rely on my selection of discourse elements that appear to be typical for the web discourse, as no formal sampling procedure has been adopted.

Government Reports

Finally, to obtain information on the position of polities towards New Age, the recent upsurge in West European government activity in the field of the new religious movements has been exploited. Over the last years, a number of governments, among them Belgium, Sweden, France, and Germany, have commissioned *enquêtes* on the "issue" of the growth of new religious movements. These commissions subsequently published reports which contained the most officious statements on new religious movements. Other governments, *inter alia* the German and Austrian states, implemented administrative bodies concerned with the control of these movements, while still others, like Italy and one Swiss canton, issued police reports on the same subject. All these documents were reviewed with respect to the position of the respective states towards New Age.

Different "National Cultures," Different Cases?

Before finishing this chapter on data collection, let me briefly explain, why I decided to treat data collected in different states as covering a single movement rather than two separate cases in different countries. First of all, I do not share the common assumption that different nation states constitute different societies, as this notion is theoretically flawed.[143] What d o e s differ across different nation states is the political opportunity structure. In this case, the latter is far more hostile to new religious movements such as New Age in Germany than it is in the U.S. (Beckford 1981: 253f). To do justice to this situation, an examination of state discourses has been conducted. This examination will show that the cross-national discrepancies mentioned above have surprisingly little impact on the discourses that define New Age.

If different national polities have little impact on New Age, differences in "national culture" might still have influence for the development of New Age. As has been elaborated in chapter 5, though, a "nation" merely constitutes an empirical event (Brubaker 1994), but cannot serve as theoretical category in sociological theory. To adopt "national culture" as an analytical category would elevate nation to an analytical theory and is thus inadmissible in the constructionist framework adopted here. Even setting theoretical problems with the "national culture" concept aside, though, it will be shown that "class culture" holds far more important ramifications for the viability of New Age identity than does "national culture." Furthermore, New Age is a phenomenon that cuts across political boundaries (Kubiak 1999: 139). At the same time, small local organizations are fairly unconnected among each other at the regional level, regardless of the fact whether state boundaries divide them or not. To be sure, most local organizations relate to each other at the local level — for instance, in almost

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[143] The equation of nations or nation states with the concept of society results from a

> "prejudice which blocks conceptual development [and that] consists in the presumption of a territorial multiplicity of societies. China is one, Brazil another, Paraguay is one and so too then is Uruguay. All efforts of accurate delimitation have failed, whether they rely on state organization or language, culture, tradition. Of course there are evident differences between living conditions in these territories but such differences have to be explained as differences within society and not presumed as differences between societies. Or does sociology want to let geography solve its central problem?"(Luhmann 1992: 68)

Unfortunately, this prejudice is omnipresent in sociological writings. Even "in the case of Max Weber there is evidence that his support for German nationalism directly influenced his conception of 'society'" (Billig 1995: 53) and, indeed,

> "[m] a n y twentieth century sociologists, when speaking of 'society', no longer have in mind (as did their predecessors) a 'bourgeois society' or a 'human society' beyond the state, but increasingly the somewhat diluted ideal image of the nation-state." (Elias [1976] 1991: XXXVII, emphasis mine)

all New Age stores locally based New Age practitioners unaffiliated with the store advertise their services — but no national or regional umbrella organization exists. Finally, the globalization in communications (Poster 1995: 83ff) delivers additional reason to move away from national units of comparison, in particular in the field of identity studies.

A conceptualization of separate New Age movements across different states would, thus, be theoretically dubious and empirically unwarranted. Of course, that does not mean that there are no differences in the reception of New Age in Germany and the US. Indeed, these differences are manifold. I already mentioned that German state is far more interventionists with respect to new religious movements than is the American one. Furthermore, predominance of voluntary associations in the religious field might facilitate the emergence and growth of new religious associations in the US.[144] These are all important differences that require careful consideration. None of these differences, however, warrant the introduction of a collectivist concept of national culture or homogenous national branches of the New Age movement. Rather, these differences can far better be analyzed with categories that cut across national borders and are at the same time more specific than national culture. The organizational environment, for instance, could serve one operative variable for the development of New Age organizations. And, to repeat, the concept of political opportunity structure effectively traces nation state influences.

When it comes to nitty-gritty empirical work, further differences across nation states must be considered. It is well known that the same variable can imply a selection of different indicators in different institutional settings (Smelser 1976: 185-193). In the present context, the markedly different usages of *sect* in American English and *Sekte* in German come immediately to mind.[145] Naturally, differences of this kind have been incorporated into the empirical analysis, too.

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[144] This follows from the thesis of the tendency towards institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell 1983).

[145] Among others, *sects* refer to mainstream Christian groups, while *Sekten* denote deviant Christian and non-Christian collectivities. For an elaboration of these differences, consult chapter 6.

5 WHAT AND WHO IS NEW AGE?

Already in chapter 2.2.5 I have asserted that it is infeasible to determine the borders of New Age in a theoretical fashion, since New Age is an empirical event. Still, many readers might be unfamiliar with the empirical substance of New Age. The following chapter will offer those readers an initial, mainly descriptive, overview of the ideologies and practices employed by the New Age movement and identify the protagonists central in its development.

After a first outline the organizational structure of New Age (section 0, see also section 7.1), its main ideological currents will be identified (section 0), thereby demarcating the contemporary boundaries of the movement. Its historical delimitation will be the topic of section 0. Because New Age is to a large extent a literary phenomenon, section 0 contains some New Age book reviews. The reviews will show that New Age is an ideologically extremely heterogeneous phenomenon, which is held together among others through several symbols of unity presented in section 0. New Age boundaries are also demarcated empirically through a limited recruitment pool described in section 0 (see also section 8.1). The observations made in these six section will then be summarized in section 5.6.

The New Age Market

From an organizational point of view, New Age differs from most other new religious movements.

> "These other groups are cohesive religious communities with fairly recognizable boundaries and a unified organization. The New Age Movement is a religious-social movement with somewhat vague boundaries." (Melton [1986] 1992: 163)

Contributing to this vagueness is not only the eclecticism of New Age practices, but also the high proliferation and turnover rates of New Age organizations. Organizational backbone of the New Age movement is a multitude of private businesses, which often suffer from low life expectancy.[146] Despite their organizational independence, most stores maintain a similar appearance even across states. Nearly all stores (94%) are scented by incense, and in the vast majority (80%) New Age background music plays. The major merchandise categories at most stores are (in order of importance):

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[146] See chapter 7 for details.

> - New Age books, magazines and audio/video materials;
> - herbs and other "natural" remedies
> - religious and pseudo-religious symbols such as crosses, Buddha statues, *etc*.;
> - objects of presumably super-natural qualities, such as crystals, pyramids, tarot cards, oija-boards, *etc*.;
> - artifacts from so-called indigenous cultures;
> - incense;
> - artwork;
> - convenience store items in tourist areas.

Most stores also host a message board, where New Age practitioners, such as tarot card readers or massage therapists, advertise with business cards or leaflets.

The market for New Age services (as opposed to goods) is slightly less fragmented. Although a myriad of New Age service organizations, too, exist, a few large-scale organization also developed, most notably *Landmark Forum*, the successor organization of *erhard seminar training (est)*, *silva mind control (smc)*, *Transcendental Meditation (TM)* and the *Church Universal and Triumphant (CUT,* formerly *Summit Lighthouse)*. According to *Time* "since 1991, approximately 300,000 mostly professional and well-educated seekers have taken the introductory *Forum* (an estimated 700,000 took Erhard-era seminars)."[147] Like most New Age organizations, *Landmark* is a for-profit business. The multinational corporation maintains 53 branches in 13 Western industrialized states and India, the bulk of which (31) are located in the U.S.[148] *Transcendental Meditation* claims to have attracted even more prospective converts. According to the groups' own sources, four million people have taken courses in TM,[149] the figures for *silva mind control* are hovering around the same number.[150] Even though these figures are likely inflated, as these client cult organizations hardly transformed all one-time seminar takers into long-term members, that is, stable customers, arguably the membership in each of these groups will be in at least five digit,

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[147] Comparing the prevalence of Western vs. Eastern religion categories in the New Age store sample, the t-test value (one-tailed) is not significant at the .05 level.

[147] I found Christian symbols such as crucifixes or angels in 87% of the surveyed stores.

[147] For instance, in chapter 2 verse 98f.

[147] For instance, already in Genesis 16: 7-11 or in the Torah 2: 228.

[147] Faltermeyer, Charlotte (1998): "The Best Of Est? Werner Erhard's Legacy Lives On in A Kinder, Gentler and Lucrative Version of His Self-Help Seminars," *Time*, March 16, 1998, <http://www.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/1998/dom/980316/society.the_best_of_est.3.html>, April 12, 1998.

[148] Compiled from <http://www.landmark-education.com/locreg>, May 12, 1998.

[149] <http://www.tm.org>, July 15, 1998.

possible six digit figures CUT's membership — being far more demanding regarding active participation — is probably to be found in five digit numbers.[151] Hence, there are much larger organizations in the New Age service market as there are in its retail counterpart.

What accounts for the differences in the structure of the two New Age markets? For one, large-scale organizations are not indigenous to New Age; they were founded much earlier than the movement itself: smc in 1944, TM in 1957 (Melton [1986] 1992: 288), CUT in 1958 (Melton [1986] 1992: 202), est in 1971 (Hexham [1993] 1998).[152] Thus, they had already grown to size, when they were incorporated into the movement. Secondly, New Age services are frequently symbolic goods, primarily belief systems, which gain value the more people consume them, in other words, adopt these belief systems. Thus, the larger these organizations become (up to a certain extent), the more attractive they become to New Agers.

Major New Age Practices

What are the practices and ideologies traded on the New Age market? Table 5-1 shows the frequency with which different practices were explicitly marked as separate categories in the surveyed stores. In this section, these practices will be portrayed and located within the larger New Age movement. No single practice or any combination thereof is necessarily present in all New Age groups or individuals. Nor is the presence of either of these practices necessary or sufficient to characterize a group or an individual as belonging to New Age. For instance, the reliance of both New Agers and their audiences on Taoist religion or philosophy as one of their identity markers does not render every Taoist a New Ager. Nor does any lack of reference to Taoism in a New Age group question its status within the movement. Instead, the practices described below can be considered the New Age's action repertoire.

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[150] Hadden, Jeffrey K. (ed.): "Silva Mind Control," <http://cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jkh8x/soc257/nrms/silv.html>, February 9, 2000.

[151] The most sober estimate estimates CUT's 1990 membership at 30,000 (Melton, Clark & Kelly 1991: 349), the Church itself claims 150,000 members (Hadden, Jeffrey, K. (ed.): "Church Universal and Triumphant," <http://cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jkh8x/soc257/nrms/cut.html>, July 15, 1998).

[152] These organizations have become part of the movement not out of self-inertia, but rather because they have been embraced by New Agers (and also because they have been attributed to New Age by the media). With the exception of CUT — who is located at the fringe of the movement — their incorporation into the movement was possible mainly because they are client cults (Bainbridge & Stark 1980a) that are low on the role specifications on their clients outside the narrow realm of the practices they advocate. Thus, New Age members can be participants in these organizations and at the same time be members of other New Age organizations.

Religious Field **98%**

    Western Religions **76%**

        Christianity in General **59%**
        Angel Worship in Particular **50%**
        Islam (mainly Sufism) **37%**
        Anthroposophy / Theosophy.................**28%**
        Judaism **2%**

    Eastern Religions.....................................**87%**

        Buddhism **62%**
        Taoism **50%**
        Hinduism..**13%**

    Nature Religions **94%**

        Wicca/Magic/Paganism........................**94%**
        American Indians (Shamanism) **72%**
        Goddess Religions.................................**48%**
        Witchkraft..**33%**
        Egyptian Nature Religion **17%**

Occult Phenomena **100%**

    UFOs...**100%**
    Tarot / Astrology / Numerology...............**93%**
    Channeling..**80%**
    Reincarnation **59%**
    Out-of-Body / Near-Death Experiences ..**22%**

Alternative Health Practices **72%**

    Nutrition (Vegetarianism/Veganism) **54%**
    Massage **48%**
    Yoga..**39%**

Psychological Practices...................................**57%**

    Relationship Counseling...........................**50%**
    Meditation (including *TM*) **48%**
    Humanistic Psychology.............................**19%**
    Hypnosis..**17%**
    erhard seminar training................................**2%**
    silva mind control.......................................**0%**

Alternative Science..**9%**

Table 5-1 Currents in New Age Stores

One can distinguish at least five main fields on which New Age draws. The most proliferate, but not necessarily the most important fields are those concerned with metaphysical belief systems. These are the religious field, which is concerned with all major world faiths and a variety of nature religions and the occult field that is concerned with an assortment of supernatural phenomena. One can also distinguish two fields that are primarily concerned with self-help practices encompassing alternative health and psychological practices. Finally, the by far smallest and least important New Age field is concerned with alternative science.

Religious Field

Many New Agers are concerned with questions of religion. Although in the media New Age is primarily associated with Eastern religions and cults, allusions to Western religious ideology and practices, in particular of Christian provenance, occur nearly as frequently explicitly[153] and much more frequently implicitly.[154] That observation is in line with the cultural resonance thesis,

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[153] Comparing the prevalence of Western vs. Eastern religion categories in the New Age store sample, the one-tailed t-value is not significant at the .05 level.

[154] I found Christian symbols such as crucifixes or angels in 87% of the surveyed stores.

because, after all, it seems hard to exaggerate "the importance of biblical religion in American culture from the earliest colonization to the present" (Somers & Gibson 1994: 28). Naturally, unmediated mainstream or fundamentalist theology does not find its way into New Age ideology. If New Agers pick up any t h e o l o g i c a l constructs, then they refer mostly Christian mystics. For instance, the works of Helena Petrowna Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner, founders of theosophy and its offspring anthroposophy, respectively, are frequently on the shelves of New Age stores. Blavatsky's and Steiner's early twentieth century works already possess historicity and tap into the familiar Christian traditions. However, the most common references to Christian tradition are rather a-theological allusions to angels. Angels are attractive to the New Age community, because as symbols of Christianity they cater to the majority of persons brought up in Christian environments. At the same time, they are not exclusively Christian, since they appear also in the qur'an[155] and the Old Testament.[156] This ambiguity makes them particularly suitable for the universalist framings of New Age, although in actuality Islam and Judaism occupy a much less prominent place in New Age ideology than Christianity.

Even stronger represented are references to a conglomerate of nature religions, most prominently pagan and (in the U.S.) Native American practices. Native Americans are triply attractive for the invocation of compassion in the American public, they are oppressed, "noble savages," and deeply embedded in American national imagination (Berger 1971: 123). In contrast, in the only Berlin New Age store I located — despite being surprisingly similar to its U.S. counterparts, material on paganism was overrepresented, even despite the fact that the utilization of pagan myths by the Nazis has certainly stigmatized this religion in Germany. Other so-call indigenous religions find their way into New Age, too. A variety of Goddess religions, for instance, appeal to the more "feminist" New Agers. Here several historically entirely separate religious traditions, which in their majority had been suspended already centuries ago, are molded into a new entity, which is allegedly nevertheless based in tradition. At any rate, it is apparent that nearly all New Age currents attempt to present themselves as drawing on historical religious traditions, while at the same time knowledge about the history of these traditions is scant.

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[155] For instance, in chapter 2 verse 98f.

[156] For instance, already in Genesis 16: 7-11 or in the Torah 2: 228.

There are also numerous references to the Eastern religions of — in the order of frequency — Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. As with indigenous religions, the knowledge of these religions as conveyed by the relevant literature is superficial. Those authors who might be more familiar with Eastern religious traditions tend to be less interested in an accurate depiction of these traditions, but rather use them as antithesis to Western rationality (Diem 1992: 50).

In essence, while the religious practices prevalent in the New Age movement encompass nominally an eclectic array of Eastern, Western and nature religions, the reliance on non-Christian traditions is selective. Both nature and Eastern religions symbolize an inversion of the "Western" rationalism and can hardly be considered frames in their own right.[157] Of the nature religions, the ones that play a role in the imagination of the "national culture" predominate.

Occult Practices

The most prominent occult phenomena New Agers are dedicated to are channeling, tarot-card and astrology readings, UFO sightings, out-of-body and near-death experiences.

Channeling

In external framings of New Age, channeling is the occult practice most closely associated with the movement (Basil 1988b: 235), although movement-internal discourses lack the ubiquity of channeling references (Riordan 1992: 105). According to New Agers, channeling is a technique in which a bodiless ancient spirit enters a human medium during a trance state and uses the latter's voice as interface for communication with the human outside world. In the bookstores I examined the most frequently mentioned channel was Edgar Cayce, who in the beginning of the 20th century channeled unspecified entities that gave advices mainly on healing topics but, in particular later in his career, also on other phenomena. During the 1980s, Cayce was also cited by the mass media as a representative for channeling, but since 1988 none of the articles in my newspaper sample has contained any reference to Cayce. A second widely known channel is Jane Roberts, who has channeled an entity called Seth. Roberts' core claim is that humans create manifest reality through thoughts, a notion that has been picked up by "creative visualization," a psychological technique intended for the

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[157] As Gamson (1992c: chapter 8) shows, every cultural theme can enables the development of a well resonating countertheme.

manipulation of physical reality. There are many other less known channelers, many of which claim to channel well-known religious figures, most prominently Jesus Christ, Mary and Buddha.

Other Clairvoyance Practices

Channeling is not the only clairvoyance practice through which New Agers attempt to enhance their knowledge and skills. Techniques such as astrology, numerology, i.e., the study of the alleged occult meaning of numbers, or tarot card readings equally belong to the repertoire of New Age. Despite the fact that these practices seem to be at least as important for New Agers as channeling, they have attracted far less media attention. At least in the case of astrology this under-reporting might be partially due to the fact that the reach of this technique extends far beyond the boundaries of New Age and is thus viewed as a phenomenon in its own right. However, I suspect that the focus on channeling is also partially rooted in most journalists' ignorance of New Age.

UFO current

This ignorance becomes even more apparent, when one looks at the popular UFO current. Obviously, there are many persons who believe in the existence of extraterrestrials and clearly do not belong to the New Age movement. Still, of all subcurrents in my typology of New Age beliefs, only the interest in UFOs can be observed across the complete sample. That shows that belief in UFOs is far from a fringe phenomenon within the movement. Yet, the mass media not even customarily associate New Age with the belief in UFOs, except when UFO devotees fit the "cult" frame discussed in the following chapter. Instead, New Age is more frequently associated with alternative health practices, which, like astrology and UFO devotion, are followed both within and outside the movement.

Alternative Health Practices

Recently the health practice current has picked up on importance. Deepak Chopra and Andrew Weil, its most prominent proponents have both been on the cover of *Time* magazine and the *New Age Journal*. Both external and internal definitions of New Age have focused on this part of the movement. "Wholistic" health practices encompass food regimes, physical and mental exercises and healing methods that omit or supplement traditional medical therapies such as surgery and pharmaceutical medication. All of these practices base in the *harmony with nature* masterframe. The most visible of these healing methods are attempts to

cure diseases with the help of crystals.[158] In media discourses crystals serve as symbols for New Age delusion, but even if crystals are also a symbol for New Age in internal movement discourse, by far more frequent are references to dietary remedies. Consequently, many New Age stores are in the neighborhood of so-called whole food stores, and magazines like *The Herb Companion* and *Vegetarian Times* can be found in nearly every New Age store. Most of these stores also feature message boards where alternative health practitioners advertise acupressure, acupuncture, chiropractice, and massage.

Certainly, one reason for the attractiveness of alternative health practices is their inexpensiveness in comparison to school medicine, an important factor for US-American New Age adherents, many of which do not carry adequate health insurance. But the price factor certainly is not the o n l y reason, why alternative health practices have become omnipresent in New Age, as alternative health practices are also popular among German New Agers, who enjoy rather comprehensive health care. Instead, it seems likely that the success of alternative medicine is partially due to the fact these practices are framed as inversions of the rationalism ostensibly advocated by school medicine. Wholistic health thus draws on the formidable countertheme *harmony with nature* (Gamson 1992b: 136f) opposed to the *progress through technology* (*ibid.*) theme which, of course, is embodied by school medicine. Thereby, as with any countertheme mobilization opportunities arise (*ibid.*, pp. 184f).

Psychological Practices

The fourth New Age field — the psychological field — focuses on self-help practices. Its techniques are equally inexpensive when compared to professional psychological and psychoanalytical help. The psychological field comprises beliefs and practices adapted from scientific psychology and various religions. Most practices are designed to increase the participant's self-confidence or to reach some individually oriented material goals. The three most prominent psychological strands are hypnosis, meditation techniques and creative visualization. From the more academic realm, versions of humanistic psychology have been incorporated. The three most important New Age mass organizations are located in this field.

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[158] Note, that neither Weil nor Chopra advocate crystal healing methods.

Alternative Science

Finally, a few references to alternative science can be found in New Age stores. Preying nominally on Kuhn's ([1962] 1976) notion of paradigm shifts in science, proponents of this current claim that science is moving towards less rationalist techniques for scientific discovery. Usually the development of relativity theory in physics is cited as a first sign that the "linearity paradigm" within science is loosing ground to more holistic approaches that value empiricism as well as intuition. Little more than the choice of terms reminds of actual discourses within the academy, though. For instance, the notion of a gradual shift away from rationalism as it is proposed by New Age theorist Marylin Ferguson (1980) defies Kuhn's actual theory that predicts sudden breaks between different scientific paradigms. Not surprisingly then, I found only a lone used copy of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in all stores I surveyed. Likewise, in Capra's (1975) *Tao of Physics*, an attempt to draw parallels between the development of quantum physics and Eastern religious traditions, Heisenberg's m o d e l of subatomic reality involving his famous uncertainty principle is confused with an isomorphic description of subatomic reality. These lapsi show that the audience to which these books cater is hardly to be found in academic circles. Nevertheless, the simplifications and misrepresentations of scientific discourse are sufficient to make alternative science current appealing to some, albeit few New Agers. In my survey, less than one tenth of New Age stores felt that alternative science was worth a separate store section.

What Does Not Belong to New Age

Thus, New Age encompasses a very heterogeneous and at times contradictory array of beliefs and practices, which has prompted the print media to speak of New Age *smorgasbord*. By and large, this view is accurate. Still, some groups depicted by the media as being part of New Age do not belong to the movement from insiders' point of view. Among them are predominantly large cooperations or religious organizations such as *Scientology* and groups that have engaged in highly unusual behavior, such as *Heaven's Gate*, which committed a widely publicized collective suicide in April 1997. Only one of the New Age bookstores I surveyed carried a book of L. Ron Hubbard — *Scientology's* founder and central figure — and this copy could be found only in the used books' section. What is more, in comparison to other large-scale New Age organizations, *Scientology* has developed a highly differentiated membership hierarchy and charges comparably high fees for its services (Bainbridge & Stark

1980b). In addition, *Scientology* also requires continuous participation and thus is averse to multiple memberships in other organizations, a characteristic atypical for New Age. Thus, while *Scientology* and New Age might or might not draw on the same recruitment pool, the actual membership of *Scientology* and New Age does not overlap. Still, the *New York Times* in an article on cults claims that, "[t]he New Age Movement is a potent phenomenon that embraces cults like the Church of Scientology and the Unification Church."[159] Thirty (>2%) articles in my sample associate New Age with *Scientology*.

While some of the from a New Agers' point of view inaccurate inclusions might be due to the admittedly amorphous New Age identity, most "mis-framings"[160] can be attributed to the general ignorance of news reporters to the New Age phenomenon, and the media preference for large-scale organizations as sources in the non-governmental realm (Gans [1979] 1980: 148). I will return to this issue in the following chapter.

The Temporal Limits of New Age

It is at least as difficult to determine when New Age has first surfaced, as it is to unambiguously draw the contemporary boundaries of the phenomenon. The question after the historical period during which New Age has arisen is by no means merely a historical one, as it touches upon important theoretical issues. In particular, the timing of the emergence of New Age will give important hints to its social origins, which in turn entail consequences for the cultural resonances in the recruitment pool.

If the widely held conception that New Age is rooted in the counterculture of the 1960s is true, then the former should share the latter's social basis, namely the new middle class. If, on the other hand, New Age is just another reincarnation of what has been termed the *occult establishment* (Marty 1970), then the social origins of New Age would be located in more peripheral strata:[161] From the viewpoint of a *Bildungsbürger*, "occultism is metaphysics for imbeciles" (Adorno 1951: 325, translation mine), while high educational attainment is

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[159] Bordewich, Fergus M. (1988): "Colorado's Thriving Cults," *The New York Times*, May 1, 1988. Writings of the Unification Church founded by Sun Myung Moon equally usually do not appear in New Age stores.

[160] Actually, there cannot be any "mis-framings" in its strict theoretical sense, here the term is simply used that the framings are at odds with empirical "reality" as measured by Critical Rationalist standards.

[161] For instance, even such mundane a cultural event as the Broadway musical *Hair* — supposedly one marker of the countercultural origin of New Age — is "an entertainment obviously n o t designed to attract the favor of middle Americans who read most of the other occult and psychic periodicals." (Marty 1970: 216, emphasis mine).

probably the most distinctive characteristic of the new middle class. Thirdly, New Age's social bases would lie somewhere inbetween the new middle classes of the counterculture and the educationally deprived strata to which the occult establishment appeals, if the movement would be rooted in the human-potential movement. To decide which, if any, of these three phenomena gave birth to New Age, New Age's temporal delimitation is essential, as temporal proximity is necessary, even though not sufficient, for any causal claims.

The identification of New Age's temporal boundaries is also indispensable for an answer to the question if the image of historical continuity of the movement is a conscious or unconscious fabrication or a mere by-product of the actual movement history. It has been suggested that a myth of movement continuity is favorable for the viability of a movement. This thesis would be weakened, if the image of the historical longevity of New Age would simply mirror actual historical processes.

When did New Age then emerge? Some authors contend that New Age is simply another manifestation of an occult tradition that reaches back several centuries in "Western" culture, a majority of scholars contends that New Age has emerged in the aftermath of the 1960s counterculture, and a third group of authors considers the human potential movement as the forerunner of New Age.

Although there are some isolated attempts to trace the beginnings of New Age back to pre-countercultural events,[162] and despite the fact that some of its posthumus protagonists, most notably Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Rudolf Steiner, Pramahansa Yogananda, Edgar Cayce, and Alice Bailey, lived around the turn of the century, very few people would claim that New Age proper emerged before the sixties. Still, there are several voices, which place New Age in the tradition(s) of "alternative" (Faber 1996: 6) or "nature" (Albanese 1990) religions that have been embraced by some European immigrants to North America for several centuries. One author even goes so far to claim that "the New Age is a contemporary manifestation of a western alternative spirituality tradition going back at least to the Greco-Roman world." (Ellwood 1992: 59). More cautious scholars consider the "New Age movement […] a subculture that overlaps with the traditional occult, but is somewhat distinct from it" (Stark &

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[162] Heelas (1996: 49f), for instance, considers the beatniks as first carriers of a "self spirituality" movement. The term "New Age" supposedly can even be traced back to Alice Bailey of the 1920s (Basil 1988a: 10). Because of the inherent meaning of the phrase new age, probably legions of millenarianists have used this phrase even far before the 1920s.

Bainbridge 1997: 113) or contend merely that the " movement emerged out of a preexisting occult-metaphysical subculture that — especially in such institutional embodiments as the Theosophical Society, New Thought churches, traditional Spiritualist denominations — was affected by, but was never completely absorbed into the New Age" (Lewis 1992: 3, similarly: Brown 1992: 87f; Melton 1988: 36; Melton 1992: 24; Poggi 1992).

Occult traditions surfaced in the US during the middle of the 19th century in the form of Theosophy and New Thought. In the late 1960s, its carriers embraced many of the practices adopted by New Age in the 1980s and 1990s.[163] At first sight, it might thus seem sensible to locate New Age within those traditions. Such view would also be somewhat congruent with those developments in social movement theory that argue that movements can be sustained through "submerged networks" during periods of inactivity (Melucci 1989; Sawyers & Meyer 1999; Taylor 1989; Whittier 1995: 257). However, it is problematic to assume movement reproduction through submerged networks without careful inspection of the actual empirical developments. It is certainly true that movements do not operate in a historical vacuum and draw on symbols, action forms and sometimes even the personnel of prior movements. However, in the absence of organizational persistence and ongoing movement activities, a conceptualization of references to the past as movement continuity renders the temporal delineation of social movements nearly impossible (Tilly 1999a: 299). Such theoretical premise would also be in danger of obfuscating the social construction of movement continuity with the actual movement development. That is not to say that prior, ideologically similar, but organizationally separate phenomena are not important for the viability of new movements. Certainly, the women's movement of the 1960s could draw on a resonance field created by the suffrage movement of the 1920s, and prominent suffrage champions did add organizational skills and — probably more importantly — serve as symbols of continuity for women's liberation four decades later (Taylor 1989).

Analogously, the existence of a rich occult tradition, which has ensured a basic familiarity with concepts such as astrology, numerology, and Christian mysticism within the population at large, has certainly helped the New Age movement in the diffusion of its ideas.[164] It is widely assumed that Alice A. Bailey has introduced the New Age label in the beginning of

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[163] Stark and Bainbridge (1997: 113) quite perceptively, if ambiguously, note that the "New Age movement [is] a subculture that overlaps with the traditional occult, but is somewhat distinct from it."

[164] Williams (1994: 805) makes an analogous argument regarding Christian Fundamentalism.

the 20th century (Hanegraaff 1996: 95).[165] Indeed, as Bochinger's (1994: 623-625) list of periodicals that carry "New Age" in their title shows, already in the middle of the 19th century ideas similar to present New Age beliefs existed.[166] The 1980s New Age movement has surely drawn on these traditions, but to therefore conceptualize New Age as just another expression of an occult milieu misses the point, as it can neither explain why New Age surfaced at a particular historical time nor why some strands of this occult tradition have been selected as pillars of the new movement, while other traditions have been neglected. Nor can such conceptualization illuminate, why different occult phenomena have enjoyed differential success. What is more, in contrast to the situation in the new social movements, one cannot meaningfully speak of the existence of submerged networks within the occult tradition. As will be shown in chapter 8, New Age groups do typically n o t evolve through the interactions within informal small groups — the building blocs of submerged networks. Instead, they are a result of professionalized recruitment of persons outside established friendship networks. In summary, the depiction of New Age as just another expression of the occult current in Western culture leads to theoretical ambiguity and is empirically difficult to sustain. It should thus be avoided.

The thesis that New Age is rooted in the counterculture, as a host of authors contends (Basil 1988a: 9; Faber 1996: 6; Gitlin 1987: 221; Hess 1993: 5; MacDonald 1995: 31; van Hove 1999a: 116), while being theoretically less ambiguous, is empirically even more difficult to sustain. During the early 1970s, the countercultural movement was fading and proliferated into successor movements such as gay liberationist, environmentalist and new feminist movements (Kauffman 1990). If New Age would be another heir to the counterculture, it should have emerged around the same time as these movements did. Yet, neither public nor scientific discourse seems to have noticed New Age as an entity before the late 70s. Only on July 11, 1978, the first article concerning New Age as it is understood here

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[165] Bochinger (1994:280ff) credits William Blake for the introduction of the New Age label, however, as Hannegraaff (1996: 96, fn. 6) rightly argues, "the mere fact that [Blake] seems to have been the first one to speak of a 'New Age' — in itself a quite unspecific millenarian term — is hardly sufficient to assign to Blake a major key function […] as historical precursor of the New Age Movement."

[166] According to Bochinger's list, the first of these magazines was released in 1843. Just like many other magazines on Bochinger's list, this magazine published by temperance advocates seems to have little in common with New Age ideology, though.

appears in either *Washington Post* or *New York Times*.[167] This article contains *inter alia* a definition of New Age by a movement protagonist.[168] The necessity to define New Age explicitly hints that the author still assumes that the reader is unfamiliar with the term "New Age," the fact that the journalist quotes a movement protagonist to obtain a definition suggests that the author himself is unsure about the substance of the phenomenon. These are clear indicators of the then recency of New Age. Social scientific discourse, lacking actuality as usual, picks up the New Age phenomenon even later. The first item concerned with New Age religion to be found in the *Sociological Abstracts* database is a paper delivered at the 1981 annual conference of the *Association for the Sociology of Religion*.[169] It is hard to believe that both journalists and social scientists would completely ignore any sizable phenomenon over a period of nearly a decade. Hanegraaff (1996: 97) in his meticulous exploration of the historical limits of New Age then concludes that only "by the later 1970s" New Age became conscious of itself as a more or less unified movement, read: acquired a collective identity.[170] Even if New Age had existed in the minds of some movement protagonists before, though, this would not suffice to speak of a new identity, since the latter equally requires an external conception of the movement. The fact that New Age has in public discourse only surfaced in the late 1970s means the New Age has emerged at least half a decade after the demise of the counterculture, which can therefore not be considered its origin. Again, that does not mean that the counterculture does not bear any relevance for New Age. Certainly, ideological and — through intermediary of the human potential movement —

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[167] Date of the first article that refers to New Age in the set of articles that is generated with the "find new w/1 age and date bef 1980" in the March 20, 1998 *LEXIS/NEXIS* News database. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary, April 11, 2005) dates the first surfacing of the term New Age defined as "of, relating to, or being a late 20th century social movement drawing on ancient concepts especially from Eastern and American Indian traditions and incorporating such themes as holism, concern for nature, spirituality, and metaphysics" to 1956. Even if the meticulous search of the dictionary's editors dug up usages of the term at that early date, a finding that is somewhat at odds with the "late 20th century" definitional element, what is important for present purposes is the date, when the term entered the discourses of wider publics, and not its first usage by some niches of the population. That date, however, can only be determined by recourse to the media discourses.

[168] Gorney, Cynthia: "Wares of Awareness: Psychic and Spiritual Necessities for the Enlightened Self," *Washington Post*, July 11, 1978, p. C-1. The movement protagonist "defines New Age so: 'They consciousness and awareness that we are more than physical bodies … concepts of love … learning to tune in and become a part of our universe.'"

[169] Hurst, Jane: "Transformation of Person and Planet in 'New Age' Religions."

[170] Hannegraaff distinguishes between New Age *in sensu stricto* and New Age *in sensu lato*, the former term denoting the collectivities associated with New Age, which nevertheless existed well before New Age was conceived as a unified collectivity, the latter term precisely that collectivity.

personal and organizational continuities to the counterculture exist, but these continuities are selective. Only some, specific individuals associated with the counterculture — most notably the less successful ones — have found their way into the New Age movement. Others were absorbed by the new issue movements, and still others, probably the vast majority, embarked on traditional careers and maintained only an ideological, if any, affinity with the sixties' movements. At the same time, many New Agers were not participants of the counterculture, and only specific ideological elements prevalent in the New Age can be attributed to the counterculture. New Age does contain a sense of social transformation, but it lacks nearly completely the political determination that characterized the students' movement of the sixties. In fact, from an ideological viewpoint New Age is probably closer to both the occult establishment and even Christianity than it is to the counterculture.[171] Thus, the counterculture is only one of the many phenomena on which New Age draws. Most likely, it is not even the most important one.

Instead, the human potential movement seems to be the precursor of New Age (Alexander 1992: 46; Bromley 1997: 127; Melton 1995: 274). In the 1970s, New Age's mass organizations — TM, smc and est — were considered part of the human potential movement (Stone 1976: 100), so there exists some organizational continuity. The human potential movement is also ideologically very close to New Age, as membership in human potential groups was not exclusive, as the levels of commitment and role conformity were very low (*ibid.*, p. 94, 99). Just like New Age, the human potential movement focused less on collective action proper and more on mass behavior (*ibid.*, p. 93). Many of the practices it employed, among others occult practices and self-help seminars, are also prominent in the New Age. Does that mean that the human potential movement is merely an outdated label for New Age? Hardly, as the label of a group is an, if not the most important asset for its collective identity. Recall Smith's definition of an ethnic group. Its very first characteristic is not accidentally "a collective proper name" (Smith 1991: 21). The "choice" of a name might be little more than arbitrary in the beginning of a group, but a name c h a n g e is certainly not. "Danes" cannot and will not easily change their label into "Germans" or even "Supermen" for that matter, even if it would get a sizable monetary compensation.

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[171] Moreover, an — arguably methodologically crude — survey among participants in some New Age meditation groups revealed that the respondents did not rate countercultural experiences as a major factor in their decision to join the groups (Gussner & Berkowitz 1988: 148, Table 4).

Conversely, gay liberationism did not just change its name to queer nation without any fundamental breaks in ideology and constituency. Despite all partisan polemics, organizational structure, ideology and role of the *Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus* is very different from that of the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*. If a name change happens, at minimum some external problems with the chosen label exist, and, usually, some internal group transformation has also occurred.

New Age and human potential movement then do have several external and internal differences. For one, New Age relies much less on academic science than did the human potential movement. Abraham Maslow and Carl G. Jung and their theories were central for the human potential movement (Stone 1976), while their influence on New Age is marginal. Eastern religions are much more prominent in external framings of the New Age than in the human potential movement. There exist little sociologically relevant research on the human potential movement, but I suspect that their constituency also varies qualitatively. As the human potential movement is more concerned with the actual substance of the academic discourse and with social change, I expect its clientele to be better educated and professionally more successful than the average New Ager.

To sum up, New Age has emerged in the late seventies, although some post-countercultural groups might have embraced the l a b e l "*n*ew *a*ge" already in the immediate aftermath of the Sixties. That situation does not warrant to date the emergence of New Age as a separate entity this far back in time, though. A collective identity always requires both the self-definition of a group under the collective label and, more importantly, some perception of the collective actor as an entity outside its immediate membership base. At least the latter is non-existent prior to the late seventies, and there is some doubt that groups that in retrospective have attributed to New Age did harbor a we-feeling as New Age movement prior to the same time. After all, given the poor organizational (and hence communication) channels of the movement, it seems unfeasible to create even some internally oriented collective identity without the assistance of mass media presence. Even the setting of the beginnings of New Age proper to 1977 or 1978 requires a very lenient interpretation of external movement identity, as in the late seventies newspaper articles on New Age were usually preoccupied with explaining the substance of the term New Age. One might thus be tempted to follow Melton's (1992: 163) claim that in the US New Age "entered the mass consciousness [only] in the 1980s." For continental Europe, into which New Age

was "imported" from North America, it seems even more prudent to conform with the view that New Age emerged only in the eighties (Bochinger 1994: 103). The central observations presented in this section hence are:

Observation 5-1: New Age emerged in the late 1970s.

Observation 5-2: New Age's most important forerunner is the human potential movement. The former, though, appeals less to the counterculture than the latter and instead embraces more groups from the traditional occult.

Having clarified the historical origins of the movement, let me now turn to its ideological substance.

Some Reviews of New Age Literature

The emergence of a separate New Age literature is certainly one of the most visible consequences of New Age (Knoblauch 1989: 506). Some authors have even suggested, that New Age really exists o n l y as a literary phenomenon (Bochinger 1994; Gabriel 1996). While such claims are grounded in an incomplete examination of New Age (Knoblauch 1996: 207), doubtlessly literature is essential for the framing of New Age. Indeed, for many New Agers the reception of literary material is a far more important source of information on the movement than personal contacts (Shimazono 1999: 131). Interestingly enough, the focus of New Age seems to be reminiscent of the mass movements collective behavior theorists had in mind, as these scholars consider general social movements as primarily characterized through a literature (Blumer [1951] 1995: 62).[172]

What are the core elements of New Age literature? To identify New Age specificities, I will review several books that are or have become distinctively New Age. That means that books that are important within the movement but are also widely read by outsiders — most notably works published within the New Age health current — will not be considered. The reviews thus do not constitute a representative survey of New Age literature, but are intended to identify the main characteristics that distinguish New Age from other literature. That does not mean that New Age literature appealing to a wider audience, such as Deepak Chopra's *Quantum Healing* or Andrew Weil's *Seven Steps to Optimum Health* differ radically from "pure" New Age books. They do not, as will be confirmed in the synopsis of this section.

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[172] Books in general have a very limited potential to trigger social change (McQuail 1983: 28).

Yet, to identify the epitome of New Age literature, a comparison of books exclusive to New Age is more suitable.

The first three reviewed works are by authors that are central in the framing of New Age in the mass media but are of limited importance for the intra-movement discourse. This is especially true for Marilyn Ferguson whom an avid observer of new religions considers the most widely accepted theorist of New Age (Melton 1988: 44). Ferguson's works were rarely on shelves of the surveyed New Age stores. Shirley MacLaine, author of the second reviewed book, is the most frequently cited protagonist of New Age newspaper article sample, and is equally popular among New Agers. The third author, Carlos Castaneda, serves as bridge between the counterculture of the Sixties and New Age. The remaining reviews discuss New Age books that have become great successes within the movement, but have not proportionally frequently been cited in the media. Two of them — *Creative Visualization* by Shakti Gawain and *Embraced By The* Light by Betty Eadie — are typical for the self-help current of New Age The third, James Redfield's *The Celestine Prophecy*, is a novel that has been perceived as a self-help guide by the New Age audience.

Marilyn Ferguson: "*The Aquarian Conspiracy*"

Marilyn Ferguson's 1980 bestseller *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Societal Transformation in the 1980s* is probably the most programmatic statement of o n e New Age ideology. In a manner unusual for New Age, the writing style of this book is very journalistic and detached.[173] Yet, the book should not be confused with a semi-official manifesto for the movement. Virtually no movement espouses a moderately unequivocal program. Most movements exceed in both personal and ideological terms even the sum of formal organizations they include, let alone any single organization who could legitimately adopt a single program. In the case of the New Age, this problem is aggravated by the diversity of sometimes contradictory currents that would render any attempt of a consistent account of the essence of its ideology futile. On top, Ferguson is not even among the most widely read New Age authors. After being four years on the market, the book had sold a mere 375,000[174] copies in North America — a relatively small figure when compared to an

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[173] This might be one of the reasons, why the book has been considered emblematic for New Age in the mass media, it resonates well in their circles, but far less in the New Age movement itself.

[174] Marquand, Robert: "Marilyn Ferguson — A Prophet of Change," *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 12, 1984, p. 23.

estimated 3.8 million US copies of Redfield's *Celestine Prophecy*.[175] Nevertheless, the book is frequently cited as ideological statement of the New Age movement in the mass media and in social scientific literature (e.g.,Champion 1993: 206; Faber 1996). As such, it has decisively influenced extra-movement framings of New Age.

Ferguson suggests that a paradigm shift in everyday culture is taking place (Ferguson 1980: 27f). Originating in among others the women's movement (*ibid.*, 389) and the new social movements of the 1960s (*ibid.*, 58, 126) a "long prophesied conspiracy" (*ibid.*, 63) is shifting the focus from materialistic and rationalistic practices towards holistic ones. Not a single collective actor is pushing for this shift, but rather a multiplicity of individuals of small groups is generating a gradual culture shift (*ibid.*, 217).

The individual can achieve the desired change in his or her worldview through a wide array of techniques. "Anything can work, [...] biofeedback, autogenic training, music, social movements, self-help networks, Zen, Tibetan Buddhism, Christianity, yoga, est, Silva Mind Control, theosophy, psychotherapies, Gestalt therapy, T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Rolfing, Big Sur, wilderness retreats," (*ibid.*, 86f) but "no single system works for everyone" (*ibid.*, 92). Ferguson constructs a decidedly universalist identity, which contains predominantly elements that require little, if any, collective action, but rather an individual self-transformation.

Ferguson's universalism contains a "high tolerance of ambiguity," (*ibid.*, 230) as she herself admits. In her reading, New Age identity thereby becomes less fragile than other movement identities, since it is not prone to antagonize specific groups. (*ibid.*, 229)

According to Ferguson, New Age practices are historically rooted and at times even primordially anchored: "In any hour, with all the stubborn teachers and healers of history who called us to our best selves, we can liberate the future." New Age's main organizational form, the "network," is "a twentieth century version of the ancient tribe or kinship." (*ibid.*, 213) And once a person has adopted New Age values, he can find his true self: "[M]ost of us are sick with guilt at having lived below our a u t h e n t i c level" (*ibid.*, 391; emphasis mine)

Ferguson identifies the new middle class as the carrier of this culture shift:

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[175] Top Bestsellers (ed.): "The Top 100 Bestsellers 1990-1998," <http://www.topbestsellers.com/ 90sbest.htm>, February 9, 2000. Redfield's book is the overall #17 of that decade and second in the non-fiction category only to John Gray's New-Age-y *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. Bookmarket.com (<http://www.bookmarket.com/selfpublish.html>, February 9, 2000) claims even 5.5 million sold copies for Redfield.

> "The participants in the Aquarian Conspiracy questionnaire represented nearly every vocational field: education, psychology, medicine, business, publishing, television, research, government, law, dentistry, the clergy, anthropology, sociology, nursing, the arts, theater, music, the military, political science, economics." (*ibid.*, 343)

Ferguson nevertheless is careful not to exclude persons lacking institutionalized cultural capital from the movement.

> "Like holistic health, transpersonal education can happen anywhere. It d o e s n ' t n e e d   s c h o o l s , but it adherents believe that the schools need *it*. Because of its power for social healing and awakening, they conspire to bring the philosophy into the classroom, in every grade, in colleges and universities, for job training and a d u l t   e d u c a t i o n ." (*ibid.*, 288; italics in the original, further emphases mine)

Ferguson's literary style appeals less to the intellectuals of the new middle class and more to the semi-educated, even though her style is far more academic than the one of most other New Age authors. She frequently recurs to metaphors and analogies and even claims that "[e]very metaphor is potentially a literal reality" (*ibid.*, 253), a proceeding that is inadmissible in scientific discourse. Ferguson's book thus caters to persons whose embodied cultural capital has not been produced in academic institutions.

Shirley MacLaine: "*Out on a Limb*"

Shirley MacLaine is one of the personalities most closely associated with New Age in the media and henceforth in public imagination. Already as an actress — her profession since the early 50s — MacLaine has been a media celebrity. This might be one reason, why the mass media with their preference for personal continuity in their informants and representatives, in particular if they are celebrities (Gamson & Meyer 1996: 288; Gans [1979] 1980: 128; Gitlin 1980: 148; Tuchman 1974; Tuchman 1978: 141), have appropriated her as spokeswoman for New Age.

Out On A Limb (MacLaine 1983) is a semi-autobiographical book that traces MacLaine's shift towards New Age values and practices. In 1987, the ABC television network broadcasted a miniseries based on the book. Both book and TV series have certainly contributed to the popularization of the New Age in general (Hanegraaff 1996: 109; Lewis & Melton 1992: ix-x; Melton [1986] 1992: 176) and channeling in particular.

Similarly to the *Aquarian Conspiracy*, *Out on a Limb* reads at times like a panopticum of New Age practices. The book contributes as a movement symbol to the unification of New Age and at the same time strengthens its universalist identity advocating a host of practices

including "reincarnation, past life recall, cosmic justice, vibrational frequencies, food-combining, spiritual enlightenment, meditation, self-realization, and God knows what else" (*ibid.*, 10).

The antagonist of the story is the author's ex-lover. A politician by profession, he embodies an emotionally deprived rationalist. Over the course of the book, MacLaine becomes increasingly estranged from him and the values he represents. Yet, at the same time MacLaine pays tribute to scientific institutions and tries to reconcile science and metaphysics. Her chapters invariably begin with quotations from persons that are popular symbols of the academy and "high culture." A quotation from Erich Fromm heads the first chapter; a quotation from Albert Einstein heads chapters 2, 6, and 17; Carl G. Jung chapter 3, Immanuel Kant chapter 8, Honoré de Balzac chapter 9.

The author grapples throughout the book with the image of ambiguity that spirituality in general and New Age in particular have acquired in public discourse. She deals with this problem in twofold. First, she tries to traditionalize New Age practices by claiming the knowledge and application of these practices would reach back to antiquity. According to MacLaine, New Age ideology collects from ancient Sumatra, Egyptian records, Hindu scriptures, the Druidic tradition, freemasons to humanistic psychology (*ibid.*, 351). MacLaine also attempts to validate New Age identity via frame bridging by extending the boundaries of science into encompassing occult metaphysics. At the same time, though, she scorns rationalism and empiricism it is embodied by her ex-lover Gerry:

> "So often had I longed to pursue some crazy metaphysical idea that might just be a recognized scientific fact in twenty years, but Gerry was the kind of man who dealt only with what he had proof of, what he could see, and what he could therefore parody or comment on sociologically in his occasional fits of black humor." (*ibid.*, 23)

> "I found that the minute I got into discussions of the metaphysical and heard people using words like 'occult,' 'astral plane,' 'cosmic vibrations,' 'etheric memory,' 'soul,' 'God' — the standard vocabulary of a study as old as time — reacted with nervous derision, sarcastic laughter, suspicion, and outright contempt." (*ibid.*, 139)

Further into the book, New Age practices are considered scientifically tested. With respect to reincarnation and channeling and referring to a popular science book[176] MacLaine writes:

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[176] Wambach, Helen: "*Reliving Past Lives: The Evidence Under Hypnosis*," New York, NY: Harper & Row 1978.

> "A certain Dr. Helen Wambach had conducted a serious of experiments, […]. The results […] were then correlated by time period, social strata, race, type of food eaten, clothing, architecture, and other cross-reference points. This book, perhaps more than any other, left no doubt in my mind that we have indeed lived past lives." (*ibid.*, 219)

Notice the awkwardness with which statistical vocabulary has been incorporated into the text. Only readers with some, yet only rudimentary scientific training will recognize scientific jargon and at the same time will not detect the uneasiness of the author with scientific writings. This observation lends credence proposition that the recruitment pool of New Age lacks the embodied cultural capital of academic elites, but does know the objectified cultural capital of these elites.

Science is not the only institution MacLaine tries to appropriate in her attempt to legitimize New Age. She also redraws Christianity's boundaries:

> "[I]n fact, the Bible more than suggests that 'angels' were missionaries from another world." (*ibid.*, 243)

MacLaine's book ends with a keying of New Age on national identity.

> "The significance of their beliefs emerged all over the Great Seal of America, on the reverse of which the legend reads, 'A New Order of Ages Begins,' along with the third eye which also appears at the Great Pyramid of Giza on the dollar bill!" (*ibid.*, 353)

Apart from these frame bridging efforts, MacLaine also attempts to render New Age frames empirically credible. "In Peru, UFO sightings are considered part of everyday life," (*ibid.*, 259) she declares. Most of her readers will be unfamiliar with Peruvian everyday life, which opens an opportunity to override her readers' inexperience with extraterrestrials and the resulting low empirical credibility of UFO sightings.

Carlos Castaneda: "*The Teachings of Don Juan*"

"This book is both ethnography and allegory," begins Carlos Castaneda's ([1968] 1974) essay *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*. Despite the fact that it was written before one could meaningfully speak of a New Age movement, it complies from the start with New Age literary standards in both content and style. Namely, it attempts to validate its contents with an appeal to the institution of science, yet its style draws heavily on analogies, which are highly unusual in scientific writings.

The Teachings of Don Juan has become a classic for the New Age movement. As such is cited by other authors in the New Age field as authoritative source. For instance, James Redfield illustrates the "first insight" in the guide to his best-selling New Age novel with a quote from *The Teachings of Don Juan* (Redfield & Adrienne 1995: 4). The appropriation of Castaneda's book by New Age testifies to the origin of the movement in the counterculture of 1960s in media discourses; Castaneda is considered the "[g]odfather of the New Age."[177] Certainly, the similarities with works that have been consciously written for a New Age audience, facilitates its construction as a New Age classic. Nevertheless, one should not forget that its creation has hinged critically on a practice, i.e., the use of hallucinogens, that is currently one of the few actions not condoned by New Age ideology. Viewed from this angle, it is surprising that *The Teachings of Don Juan* could become one of the invented literary origins of the movement in both intra-movement and audience imagination.

Castaneda wrote the book while being a graduate student in anthropology at UCLA, later he published several sequels as a non-affiliated author. This study is about his experiences with hallucinogens under the supervision of an Yaqui Indian, Don Juan. It is divided in two parts. In first half of the book, Castaneda recounts his experiences with altered states of consciousness. In the second part he attempts to interpret his associations with a "structural analysis." Large stretches of the repetitive book are solely dedicated to the description of objects and real and imagined characters Castaneda encountered during his tutelage with Don Juan.

Castaneda extracts a "structural scheme" from his recollections (Castaneda [1968] 1974: 189). The scheme is supposed to explicate the basic insights he gained from his experiences. In line with many authors from or adopted by the New Age movement, the thereby obtained theses are extremely general and open to a wide variety of interpretations. For instance, the first of four "units" of Castaneda's "structural scheme" contain

> "the following seven concepts as its proper components: (1) to become a man of knowledge was a matter of learning; (2) a man of knowledge had unbending intent; (3) a man of knowledge had clarity of mind; (4) to become a man of knowledge was a matter of strenuous labor; (5) a man of knowledge was a warrior; (6) to become a man of knowledge was an unceasing process; and (7) a man of knowledge had an ally." (*ibid.*, 190f)

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[177] Epstein, Benjamin & Carlos Castaneda: "A Rare Conversation with the Magical Mystery Man," *Los Angeles Times*, December 26, 1995. p. E4.

Notice, that virtually no line of action is predetermined through these general statements. The ensuing explications of above concepts are equivocal on the question, how to achieve the goal to become a "man of knowledge." Still, two peculiarities deserve attention.

For one, despite its generality above propositions show an affinity with (a) enlightenment traditions and (b) Protestant ethics. The heavy emphasis on continuous learning paired with "clarity of mind," which easily could be interpreted as rationality, in essence is no more than a restatement of the enlightenment project. Castaneda takes some exceptions to modern science, though. He debunks linear models, as "space does not conform to Euclidean geometry, time does not for a continuos unidirectional flow, causation does not conform to Aristotelian logic," (Goldtschmidt in Castaneda [1968] 1974: 9).

Like MacLaine, Castaneda also draws heavily on Protestantism. At the same time expression "unbending intent," "strenuous labor," and "unceasing process" covey a relentlessness that all too familiar from the Protestant ethic, as has been analyzed in Weber's ([1904] 1986) famous study. And, Castaneda insists like MacLaine on the rootedness of his method in ancient culture, namely American Indians traditions. As his insights are embedded in Native American culture, "any attempt to classify [his] field data on [his] own ["Western"] terms would be futile" (*ibid.*, 20). Yet, obviously his findings resonate well in Western culture, in particular in the American context.

Another for the present purposes important characteristic of Castaneda's rhetorics is his unconcernedness with collective action proper. As his general are fairly open to different interpretations, they are exclusively concerned with individual action.[178] The book is intended to introduce readers into alternative realities for their personal benefits, regardless of existing group differences. This for New Age literature typical focus on individualism is even more apparent in the newer New Age books reviewed next.

Shakti Gawain: "*Creative Visualization*"

Shakti Gawain's ([1979] 1982) guide to meditation techniques entitled *Creative Visualization* is typical for the New Age self-help current (Hanegraaff 1996: 56). It merges simplified psychological techniques with allusions to spirituality, supposedly to equip the reader with tools to achieve his goals.

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[178] The ally mentioned in the seventh proposition is a supernatural entity.

Like MacLaine and (to a lesser extent) Castaneda, Gawain claims to be a convert from the pure enlightenment project.

> "I was brought up with a very scientific and background and education, and the ability to heal other people at a distance has been one of the hardest things for me to understand and accept." (Gawain [1979] 1982: 62)

The central tenet of the "creative visualization" is the attainability of one's goals through vivid imagination of these goals in one's mind. The book describes some exercises that supposedly enhance one's imaginative abilities. For instance, almost an entire chapter reads:

> "Sit or lie down comfortably, close your eyes and breathe deeply, slowly and naturally. Gradually relax deeper and deeper.
>
> Imagine something that you would like to manifest. Imagine that it has already happened. Picture it as clearly as possible in your mind.
>
> Now in your mind's eye surround your fantasy with a pink bubble. Pink is the color associated with a heart, and if this color vibration surrounds whatever you visualize, it will bring to you only that which is in perfect affinity with your being.
>
> The third step is to let go of the bubble and image it floating off to the universe, still containing your vision. This symbolizes that you are emotionally 'letting go' of it. Now it is free to float around in the universe, attracting and gathering energy for its manifestation.
>
> There is nothing more you need to do." (*ibid.*, 73)

This "technique" can be considered emblematic for the book. It is remote from the audience everyday experiences. Its intended goals are primarily individualistic; Gawain herself suggests at various points throughout the book the reader's health, change in one's physical appearance, change in one's self-confidence, satisfying relationships, career advances, self-actualization, travel as possible goals (*ibid.*, e.g., 100 or 107f). The suggested actions are as individualistic as the goals, only one out of a total of 38 chapters is dedicated to "creative visualization in groups" (*ibid.*, 114). To be sure, there are regularly references to dyadic relationships, but these relationships are hardly viewed as the basis for interaction, but as a means to acquire "love" or financial stability.

In the validation of her approach, Gawain relies frequently *harmony with nature* masterframe described by Gamson (1992b: 136f). Creative visualization "involves understanding and aligning yourself with the natural principles that govern the workings of our universe;" (Gawain [1979] 1982: 4); "I am naturally enlightened;" (*ibid.*, 22); "[a]bundance is my natural state of being;" (*ibid.*, 23) "[n]ature abhors a vacuum" (*ibid.*, 54).

She also suggests to rely on religious traditions, although "it is not necessary to believe in any metaphysical or spiritual ideas" (*ibid.*, 4). Nevertheless, "[m]ention of God, Christ, Buddha or any great master adds spiritual energy to your affirmation." (*ibid.*, 26) "If you invoke one of the masters, such as Buddha, Christ, or Mary, you are calling forth the universal qualities which that person symbolizes." Notice, that in the last two quotations Gawain is explicitly universalist, while at the same time Christian religion is *primus inter pares* supplying two "masters" outnumbering one Buddha, although according to the book jacket Gawain studied Eastern philosophy.

As above quotations illustrate, Gawain's writing style for the short book is highly repetitive. It shares this style with Betty Eadie's book on near-death experiences.

Betty J. Eadie: "*Embraced By The Light*"

Betty Eadie's ([1992] 1994) "*New York Times* #1 bestseller"[179] *Embraced by the Light* is a more recent New Age work. The book was first released by a small independent publishing company — Gold Leaf Press — and upon its retail success the rights to the book were bought by Bantam, a publisher that maintains a voluminous New Age line.

This title recounts the near-death experience of the author, through which she has supposedly been guided by angels. The experience is described as having been extremely comforting. It assured Eadie of the existence of otherworldly companions; it taught her that she has a mission to accomplish in her worldly life; and that there is an afterlife. In addition, her knowledge grew enormously during her short visit to a different world.

Unlike Gawain and MacLaine, who claim to have espoused rationalistic believes before their adoption of New Age values, Eadie recounts her struggle with conventional Christianity in the beginning of her conversion process. Although her experience is decidedly Western with angels and Jesus being her major guides through the afterlife, her appeal is universalist. It could even be interpreted evolutionary, and thus standing in the spirit of enlightenment:

> "Why didn't God give us only one church, one pure religion? […] Each of us, I was told is at a different level of spiritual development and understanding. Each person is therefore prepared for a different level of spiritual knowledge. […] People in one religion may not have the complete understanding of the Lord's gospel and never will have while in that religion. But that religion is used as a stepping stone to further knowledge." (Eadie [1992] 1994: 45)

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[179] According to the the book cover of the paperback edition.

This emphasis on learning goes well Melvin Morse's attempts to legitimize Eadie's findings with the help of institutionalized cultural capital, when he points to research on near-death experiences "throughout the world, including by the University of Florida, Boston Children's Hospital, and by the University of Ultrech (*sic*) in the Netherlands" (Morse in Eadie [1992]1994: xiv).

Apart from Christianity and enlightenment, Eadie also keys on American national identity:

"I distinctly remember watching the American pioneers crossing the continent and rejoicing as they endured their difficult tasks and completed their missions." (Eadie [1992] 1994: 52)

It does not matter for Eadie that her Native American ethnic identity (Morse in Eadie [1992] 1994: xviii) does not resonate well with such praise of the pioneers.

It should be noted in a manner unusual for New Age authors, Eadie also discusses an issue that is hotly contested in the political realm: "Abortion, I was told [during my near-death experience], is contrary to that which is natural" (*ibid.*, 95). To be sure, she immediately weakens her claim saying that "the spirit [of the aborted fetus] also feels compassion for its mother, knowing that she made a decision on the knowledge she had" (*ibid.*, 95). Still, the presence of a politically contested statement is highly exceptional within New Age literature, as none of the other reviewed books resorts to such arguments. The resulting possible negative effects for the book sales have probably become mediated by the fact that the main carriers of New Age (see chapters 7 and 8) and the anti-abortion movement (see Luker 1984) are unaffiliated women with little institutionalized cultural capital. This overlap in the recruitment pool might explain the comparable high tolerance of New Agers for anti-abortionist views.

James Redfield: "*The Celestine Prophecy*"

James Redfield's 1993 novel *The Celestine Prophecy* is one of the most peculiar success stories of New Age. Although Redfield's book is decidedly fictional, apparently large parts of its readership have considered at least some, if not most of its contents authentic. Its nine insights have been taught in workshop format and Redfield himself has co-authored *The Celestine Prophecy: An Experiential Guide*, in which he and a co-author suggest some techniques, how to implement the insights from the novel into one's life. If one examines the

reviews Redfield has received at a large internet bookstore,[180] it shows that primarily Redfield's followers consider the novel non-fiction (74%, n=36[181]), while critics are more likely to judge the book as fiction, although even they to a sizable extent (40%, n=57) treat the contents of the book as factual.[182]

The novel's main character and storyteller, a college graduate in sociology, travels to Peru to recuperate an ancient scripture that contains nine "Insights" that would help to bring about the spiritual transformation of humanity. The antagonists of the story are the Peruvian government and the Catholic church. The narrator's allies are local priests and researchers employed at prestigious American universities such as New York University and University of Southern California (Redfield 1993: 18, 53). The constellation of government and church elites attempting to prevent to deprive the masses from important knowledge draws of course on the *popular democracy* masterframe (Gamson 1992b: 139).

Redfield also shares MacLaine's and Gawain's initial skepticism towards metaphysics. He recalls that upon first hearing of the scripture he "shook [his] head and raised an eyebrow cynically" (Redfield 1993: 5). He asks the person introducing him to the manuscript, "[d]o you really believe all this?" He gradually changes his mind during his search for the manuscript. Throughout the book, there are two parallel plots. The first part of each chapter describes how the protagonist acquires a new Insight from the manuscript. In the remainder of each chapter, the newfound Insight is explicated. Insights are kept on a very general level and usually contain common New Age propositions. For instance, "[t]he Third Insight is that the universe on the whole is made up of energy" (*ibid*., 74f). The First Insight is of particular importance here, as it suggests that a cultural "transformation is occurring now because of the number of i n d i v i d u a l s having [a new] awareness all at the same time" (*ibid.* 8, emphasis mine). The anticipated social change is thus simply a result of aggregate, mainly coincidental, changes in worldviews and does not require collective action proper.

Redfield uses several spokespersons from the academy to legitimize New Age ideas. One of Redfield's allies testifies that he represents "ten prominent scientists" (*ibid*., 27), and in the

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[180] <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ISBN=044651862X/0/002-9297840-9459517>, May 11, 1998.

[181] The sample size refers to those reviews that indicate clearly, if the reviewer considers the book fiction or non-fiction and if she evaluates it contents positively or negatively. This applied to 93 of 132 (70%) of the cases.

[182] The difference is significant on the .001 level according to student's t-test.

area where the manuscript is suspected, "various scientific organizations had their meetings […], biologists and physicists mainly" (*ibid.*, 40). Like MacLaine he thus draws on institutionalized and objectified cultural capital, and like her he does not draw on the embodied cultural capital usually available to academics.

Similarly to Ferguson and MacLaine, Redfield also places the anticipated social transformation within longstanding traditions claiming that the upcoming social transformation will finish up "not only the twentieth century but a thousand year period of history as well" (*ibid.*, 21). The "medieval world view, your world view, begins to fall apart in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries" (*ibid.*, 23).

A further parallel to *Out on a Limb* is the protagonist's longing for a life partner after some "unsuccessful" long-term relationship. This partner, whose connectedness to the main character is in both cases considered "natural," is found towards the end of both books, but ultimately the wish for a relationship remains unfulfilled for the time being. If my proposition that potential New Age recruits are frequently disconnected from what they would consider their primary networks — the nuclear family, in particular a spouse — is true then this aspect of the plots resonates well in audience pool.

Commonalties Among the Reviewed Literature

Although the books reviewed here do not share a clear-cut common ideational denominator, there exist some elements that characterize almost all New Age literature. To begin with, the biographies of New Age authors share some parallels; most notably, most authors enjoy little institutional support. Secondly, most New Age authors use an uncomplicated, simplistic, yet ambiguous style of writing. As to similarities in the content of the writings, there are few commonalties between authors of different New Age strands beyond their focus on eclecticism and individualism. One substantive agreement of interest for present purposes is that most authors key New Age on the *harmony with nature*, *nationalism*, and *popular democracy* masterframes.

Biographical Similarities

Let me start with the social location of New Age authors. Most New Age authors were not financially independent prior to their involvement with New Age. Instead, they have often been freelance writers lacking institutional support. For instance, James Redfield graduated in 1972 with a B.A. in sociology from Auburn University and worked as a therapist until

1989, when he started his career as an author with *The Celestine Prophecy*.[183] Betty Eadie as a housewife with high school education depended on the income of her husband before the release of her book (Eadie [1992] 1994: 149). Shakti Gawain attended Reed College and a University of California campus and graduated with a B.A. degree (Gawain [1979] 1982: 129).

To be sure, a sizable minority, in particular in New Age's health current, did enjoy some academic support. Andrew Weil was a graduate student at Harvard and a part-time lecturer at the University of Arizona,[184] and Deepak Chopra was a medical director at Tufts and Boston University[185] Betty J. Eadie's mentor Melvin D. Morse conducts research at the University of Washington (Morse in Eadie [1992] 1994: xiv), and Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and Raymond A. Moody, who served at the University of Virginia (Moody [1977] 1988: 149), are prominent exceptions. Notice that in all these persons were employed in the medical field, which is less involved in social change than in individual transformations. In addition, even these New Age celebrities are not nearly as entrenched in scientific or political institutions as most leaders of other contemporary movements are. Many new social movement activists have started their movement careers in the academy and frequently have remained affiliated with academic organizations (Seidman 1995; Gitlin [1995] 1996),[186] or have moved to the professions. Many Christian-fundamentalist movement leaders are embedded in the infrastructure of the Republican party (Oberschall 1993: 339). In contrast, New Age leaders usually had to create their own organizations with little help from the institutional framework they were located in. James Redfield's case is probably the most instructive in this respect. He started publishing his best-selling novel as an independent private entrepreneur and only later — after the success of the book had become apparent — sold the publishing rights to *Time Warner*. Thus, the achievement business success was instrumental in his ascent to movement leadership. Similarly, Deepak Chopra first needed to accumulate capital through the sales of his books before he could open his own *Institute for Ayurvedic Medicine*. Hence, while most other movement entrepreneurs can fall back on some institutional support, if their movement mobilizations fail, most New Age authors rely on the success of their books as

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[183] <http://www.celestinevision.com/re_bio.html>, May 12, 1998.

[184] *Time*, May 12, 1997, p. 71.

[185] <http://www.chopra.com/aboutDeepak.htm>, August 2, 1998.

[186] For some limitations academic affiliation imposes on movement leaders, refer to Taylor & Raeburn (1995).

their primary source of income; they become or are small entrepreneurs. Their affiliations with academic institutions serves a mere legitimizing device for their theses, but is devoid of any institutional "insurance" other movement leaders enjoy. In the following chapters we will see that there are serious consequences to the fact that New Age movement leaders are businesspersons rather than volunteers, as are most other movement leaders.

Stylistic Parallels

The authors' writing style is tied to their social origins. Because many New Age propositions are at odds with everyday life experiences or popularized academic findings, the authors usually recount their initial skepticism to a New Age worldview and subsequently frame the contested theses as conjectures developed by a cultural or academic vanguard. To accomplish this task, the authors draw when possible on symbolic and institutionalized cultural capital of the academy, but they do not utilize the embodied cultural capital held by academics. In other words, they appeal to academic institutions, but do not appropriate academic writing style or technical language of the academy. Those authors who hold academic degrees normally mention their institutionalized cultural capital on the book cover, those who do not draw on the symbolic capital produced by academic institutions. The most frequently used stylistic devices are metaphors and analogies, which are sparsely used in fairly unequivocal academic writing. When occasionally technical jargon appears, it merely serves as symbol for science and seldomly contributes to the clarification of an argument.

Another stylistic peculiarity of New Age literature is an absence of satiric elements, which it shares with journals for the occult establishment (Marty 1970: 222).[187] Because persons with a high amount of embodied academic cultural capital but little economic capital often exhibit rather disenchanted dispositions towards the issues addressed by New Age (Bourdieu 1991: 149f), this earnestness is an additional indicator which supports the proposition that the cultural capital of New Age's readership has not primarily been produced within the established academic institutions.

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[187] MacLaine (1983: 23) even scolds her ex-lover lover to be "the kind of man who dealt only with what he had proof of, what he could see, and what he could therefore parody or comment on sociologically in his occasional fits of black humor."

Keyed Frames

New Age literature keys several well-known frames. Modulations of the *harmony with nature* masterframe frequently appear. There are also various attempts to bridge New Age frames with ethnic identities. A number of frames are also keyed on Christian themes. From the viewpoint of movement theory it is also important that many frames draw on the self-reliance theme inherent in the liberal individualism masterframe.

As above reviews indicate, the *harmony with nature* frame, wholeness in New Age terminology, surfaces in almost all New Age works. "If you think of nature as a hostile force, separate from yourself, you will go through life unnecessarily afraid and cut off from one of the great sources of spiritual nourishment," (Weil 1995: 152) is the tenor of this theme.

Many New Age authors appeal to ethnic identities, preferably those of marginalized ethnic groups that do not play a significant role in politics. Thus, Native American identity probably the most frequently invoked primordial identity in the American New Age movement. It has been already suggested above, that Native Americans are attractive to Americans, since they play an important role in the nation's self imagination. One is tempted to add that the wide spread ignorance of the thought systems and practices actually prevalent among the different Native American tribes contributes also to their popularity as legitimating force. So, Castaneda's teacher is an American Indian; Betty Eadie emphasizes her Sioux heritage; Andrew Weil discusses Native American healing methods; Redfield and MacLaine Peruvian indigenous peoples.

While American Indian identity can easily be invoked because most readers are unsure at best of its substantive contents, the omnipresence of Christian symbols can be explained by the familiarity of New Age readership with Christian symbolism.

A very important ideational element in New Age literature is its focus on the self as nexus for all suggested action lines. Be it creative visualization, be it the experimentation with hallucinogenic substances, be it the encounter with angels or extraterrestrials, the largely unconnected individual stays of the center of attention. This emphasis of the self has prompted some authors to consider New Age as a prime instance of (post-)modern individualism (Heelas 1996; Hanegraaff 1999). Thus, clearly, New Age shares an elective affinity with individual, uncoordinated action.

Symbols of Unity

Given the scope of New Age practices and the institutional and ideational incoherence of New Age, it is difficult to determine, why New Age still appears as an entity. The most important reason that New Age is perceived as a unitary phenomenon is its continuous treatment as such by the audiences, most notably the mass media. In contrast, an internal movement idea is difficult to discern. There do exist some common New Age symbols, though.

New Age Music

New Age music is not only one of the symbols that are present in nearly every New Age setting, it also is one of the most important symbols in the media. In fact, no other New Age strand is more frequently discussed in the newspapers I have examined. One reason for the salience of New Age music, of course, is that appears is "on the beat" of editorial desks. When New Age became an official Grammy category in 1986 (Berman 1988: 260), for instance, the appearance of at least two news stories per year — one, when the nominations for Grammy performances were released, the second one, when the winners were announced — in every US-American newspaper and most European broadsheets was virtually guaranteed. Likewise, the concert of well known New Age musicians — among them Yanni, Paul Winter, George Winston, Tangerine Dream, Enya, Michael Hedges, Alex de Grassi, Mike Oldfield, Andreas Vollenweider, John Tesh, Mannheim Steamroller — usually yields a mentioning, if not a complete article in the local pages of the newspaper from the city or region where the concert is held. In addition, New Age music is backed up by professional corporations, namely the record companies *Windham Hill* and *Narada* and the radio station franchise *The Wave*.[188]

That music is a formidable resource in both building movement identity and the dissemination of movement ideology in the wider population is well-documented (Eyerman & Jamison 1998). In fact, there are even movements such as the hip-hop movement that

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[188] Of course, New Age authors can expect some support from their publishing houses, too. However, many New Age works appears with relatively small publishers which lack elaborate ties to the mass media or even are published by the authors themselves. There also are no large publishers that focus solely on New Age as *Windham Hill* and *Narada* do. Lastly, the seriousness conveyed by books (McQuail 1983: 28) does not resonate well with New Age's image of superficiality, journalists writing book reviews might therefore be averse to select New Age books.

started out in part as a new music style (Rose 1994). How does New Age music influence the development of New Age?

On the whole, New Age music is relatively monotonous and frequently instrumental. The main instruments used in its production are harps, pianos, flutes, all of which are frequently substituted through synthesizers. The scarcity of vocals entails both advantages and disadvantages for New Age. As there is no explicit message in New Age songs the symbol is clearly universalist: Within wide limits, different movement members interpret the spirit of the New Age music differently. Thus, New Agers holding widely divergent views listen or practice the same music and thereby can imagine a unity among themselves. However, the structure of the songs does implicitly set some limits, in particular in the area of activism. As pop music devotees react to the mood of a song even if they are not able to interpret its lyrics concisely (Gitlin 1987: 197), the monotony and mellowness of New Age music resonates well with passivity. New Age music, thus, has an elective affinity with mass based, yet apathetic movements.

Other Symbols

Just like New Age music, most other symbols of New Age are fairly open to different interpretations. One of the more popularly known symbols, crystals, is frequently associated with meaninglessness or superficiality in then mass media. For New Agers, crystals symbolizes *harmony with nature* masterframe. Crystals are at the same time natural and represent an extreme case of order, which is another highly salient frame in contemporary society (Bauman 1991).

The smell of incense, which penetrates almost all New Age stores, is also equivocal. For New Agers aromas also represent the *harmony with nature* theme, as, for instance, those persons who possess an elaborate smelling sense are "the earthiest of types" (Chopra 1991: 151). Incense also violates *harmony with nature* countertheme *progress through technology*, room "laden with candles, redolent with roses and incense [...]seems an unlikely site for cutting-edge medical research."[189] By and large, incense is open to a large variety of interpretations.

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[189] McDowell, Jeanne, Alice Park/, and Lisa H. Towle: "Faith & Healing: Can Prayer, Faith and Spirituality Really Improve Your Physical Health? A Growing and Surprising Body of Scientific Evidence Says They Can," *Time*, June 24, 1996, p. 56.

While ambivalence of symbols might be an obstacle for any goal directed collective action, "symbol ambiguity (or 'multivocality') can also be regarded as a virtue, allowing many people to rally around shared symbols even if their meaning is only partially shared" (Williams 1994: 796f).

New Age's Gender Bias

With these elementary characteristics in mind,. Two traits of its constituency are immediately apparent. The first one is a gender bias, that is women are overproportionally represented in New Age. The second characteristic is the middle class bases.

If the existing data are unanimous in any respect, it is on the question of a gender bias (Barker 1989: 15; Castro 1996: 21; Rose 1998), which some even allege to be at the basis of New Age identity (Hess 1993: 140). One study of a astrologers' congress counted three times as many women than men at this event (Feher 1992b: 90). My own count of attendees at the Del Mar *Whole Life Expo* yielded a count of 228 women and 47 men at the eight lectures and seminars I attended.[190]

Some scholars think that New Age is particularly attractive for women, since its ideology does not marginalize women's beliefs (Feher 1992a: 187; Robbins 1988: 195). It is true that

> "much of [the New Age] spiritualist revival has taken specifically feminist slant. Feminist caucuses and critique of sexist language, male conceptions of deity, and the women's exclusion from leadership have proliferated within traditional Judeo-Christian religions. Outside such institutions, feminists are constructing what they term a 'postpatriarchal' spirituality that builds on holistic spiritual tradition, emphasizes the 'intrinsic unity of all forms of being,' and includes 'women's spirituality, Goddess spirituality, Wicca, Native American spirituality, Taoism, Buddhism, Sufism, and yoga.'" (Whittier 1995: 177f)

But ideological explanations for recruitment have turned out tenuous, as the demise of relative deprivation theory has shown. There, thus, likely are also some structural reasons for the gender bias of New Age. We will see in chapters 7 and 8 that New Age recruits usually come from the low middle class and are distinguished from other low middle class members through a lack of network ties. As the most significant networks for the low middle class are families and their workplace (Gans [1988] 1991), those persons from these classes that are unemployed or self-employed are more likely to turn to New Age. As it is very well known

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[190] Data base on researcher's judgement based on visual appearance.

that the employment rate of women is far lower than the same rate for men,[191] it is likely that some of the gender bias can be explained through differing locations in the work force. Of course, the crude aggregate data which support this thesis do not allow for any definite conjectures, but the thesis that not a small part of the gender bias is of spurious nature seems at least as plausible as the thesis that the bias is based in the ideological structure of the movement. Much more definite than the unmediated effect of gender on New Age recruitment, is the effect of class, though.

To sum up, New Age is a prototype of what has been termed a *m a s s   m o v e m e n t* ; it is   h i g h   o n   m e m b e r s h i p   n u m b e r s,   b u t   l o w   o n   w e - f e e l i n g   (Turner & Killian [1957] 1972: 246). Consequently, it   e n g a g e s   l i t t l e   i n   *c o l l e c t i v e*   a c t i o n, but instead mainly triggers individual actions or even leads to passivity. From an organizational point of view, New Age is a   h i g h l y   f r a g m e n t e d   m a r k e t   c o m p r i s i n g   m a i n l y   s m a l l   p r i v a t e   b u s i n e s s e s, except for some large-scale organizations — TM, est/*Landmark Forum*, *smc* — that cater to the self-help current. Most central movement protagonists are   s m a l l   e n t r e p r e n e u r s. These entrepreneurs attempt to appeal to a   l a r g e l y   s e m i - e d u c a t e d   r a n k - a n d - f i l e   f o l l o w i n g   Different New Agers embrace a variety of different, at times contradictory ideologies in the fields of religion, occult phenomena, health, psychology and alternative science. Most of New Age's ideological elements draw explicitly on an eclectic variety of non-indigenous religion and belief systems, yet i m p l i c i t l y   t h e y   r e l y   m o r e   s t r o n g l y   o n   C h r i s t i a n   a n d   e n l i g h t e n m e n t   t r a d i t i o n s.

Why was New Age able to attract a large number of supporters, yet is unable to trigger any sizable mobilizations for collective action? How is the New Age movement able to maintain its unity despite vast ideological differences within the movement? Why are New Age organizations nearly exclusive small business? Why is there no umbrella organization

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[191] In June 1999, an estimated 59% of US adult women were employed, compared to 74% of adult men (Source: US Department of Labor Statistics, <http://146.142.4.24/cgi-bin/surveymost?lf>, July 28, 1999).

representing the entire movement? These are some of the questions I will address in the following chapters.

6 IDENTITY DISCOURSES AND COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES

Most empirical research that is concerned with collective identity and framing issues of movements has until now focused on the construction of movement identities through movement actors themselves (Benford 1997: 421). Thereby, the theoretically firmly established conjecture that collective identities are negotiated between actors within and outside the movement (Gusfield in Shupe & Bromley 1980: 8; Hunt, Benford & Snow 1994; McAdam, McCarthy & Zald 1996: 19; Snow & Oliver 1995) has been ignored. This chapter aims to narrow this empirical gap by juxtaposing the self-conception of New Age discussed in the preceding chapter with the various other actors in its identity field.

Protagonists	Rank-and-File Members (Clients) New Age Entrepreneurs New Age Celebrities
Antagonists	Anti-Cult Movement Fundamentalist Christians Skeptics Antifascist Groups (*in Germany*) The State (*Germany, Austria, Belgium, etc.*)
Bystander Public	The State (*US; U.K., etc.*) Mass Media All Other Groups

Table 6-1 New Age Identity Field

Table 6-1 maps the New Age identity field. New Age's protagonists range from rank-and-file members, which oftentimes construct rather idiosyncratic facets of New Age identity, to New Age celebrities, who through their voices in the media shape the New Age as it appears to most outsiders. Inbetween these two groups are New Age entrepreneurs, which are the most creative, but not necessarily most effective actors in the internal construction of the movement. The antagonists of New Age consist of three different groups, which are organizationally and ideologically only remotely related among each other. The secular anti-cult movement debunks New Age just like other new religious movements as mentally harmful. Fundamentalist Christians consider New Age simply as another reincarnation of Satan. A third, comparatively small group of antagonists are skeptics that question the scientific validity of New Age claims. In some Continental European cases, the state appropriated anti-cult movement rhetorics and can thus be added to the list of antagonists. In other cases, most notably in the US, the state is more accurately characterized as a bystander,

albeit a very important one. Finally, there are the mass media, which are essential to external framings and thus recruiting opportunities and obstacles.

Of course, New Age identity is also constructed in settings that do not involve any of these collective actors. Yet, these are the most pro-active groups in the New Age identity field, whose framings of New Age are crucial to the understanding of the movement by other actors. In addition in particular the mass media reflect to a large extent the discourses on New Age by other actors.

A major thread that will lead through this chapter is the contention that, essentially, four different and rather unconnected conceptions of New Age exist. First, New Age is viewed as an avantgarde movement that combines a number of different spiritual and intellectual traditions. This is the principal intra-movement framing. Second, New Age is constructed as a threat to Christianity, a notion unsurprisingly put forth by fundamentalist Christians. Third, New Age is conceptualized as a collection of abusive cults, an idea that has originated in the anti-cult movement and has been picked up by some (West European) polities and somewhat modified also surfaces in the mass media. Finally, New Age is presented as an inconsequential fad that primarily serves the business objectives of New Age entrepreneurs. That is the dominant media framing and hence the most widespread opinion outside the movement and its countermovements.

I will show that New Age has failed to transform from a proto-movement engaging in collective behavior to a movement engaging in collective action, (partly) because it failed to synchronize extra-movement and intra-movement discourses. Instead, these discourses exist more or less independent from each other.

The lack of dissemination of discourses internal to New Age entails some ramifications for the attractiveness of the movement to outside persons. In particular, the perception of New Age as being unprofessional has barred the recruitment of many movement entrepreneurs: As these entrepreneurs are usually professionals by training (Zald & McCarthy [1975] 1987), they are not likely to consider joining environments deemed amateurish. Unfortunately for its collective action potential, New Age is a collective actor that would desperately need such entrepreneurs for the cognitive liberation of its rank-and-file members, who seem incapable of forging collective action proper.

At the same time, the asynchronicity between external and internal movement framings is precisely the reason, why the movement could sustain collective behavior and did not

disappear altogether: The fervent outside attacks on the incoherence of New Age failed to resonate with the empirical reality of the proto-movement as it is experienced by insiders.

When the collective identity discourses of the proto-movement are compared to those associated with successful movements on the one hand and nascent collective actors that could not even sustain sizable collective behavior on the other, it becomes clear why New Age did sustain collective behavior, but could not generate collective action proper.

Take the new social movements, which have triggered a huge amount of collective action, and various terrorist movements, which have failed to generate any numerically substantial collective action and ultimately and faded into oblivion before having achieved any success as measured by the standards elaborated the subsection on the political and cultural impact in chapter 3.1. In their cases, huge overlaps between the substantive definitions of the collective identities according to the different actors exist. What differs between movement and its antagonists is the moral evaluation of these contents. Concretely, there is little disagreement between the queer movement and fundamentalist Christians over the question that queer nation attempts to extend the space for non-mainstream sexual activities. Neither did German state officials dispute that the *Red Army Faction* aimed for a radical restructuring of the polity with terrorist means. Instead, the actors in these cases are at variance, when it comes to the normative appraisal of the goals in question. Fundamentalist Christians and the state, respectively, prefer the status quo over the movement goals. Sure, there are also disputes what these goals "really" are. For instance, a majority of queer activists consider homosexuality a natural endowment, while most fundamentalist Christians claim it is an immoral choice. Likewise, *Red Army Faction* and German government held very different conceptions of the state. But each of these substantive differences were h o t l y c o n t e s t e d on the c o m m o n c o n c e p t u a l t e r r a i n . We will see that there is hardly any contest of concepts between movement antagonists, protagonists and bystander public in the case of New Age. Instead, discourses on New Age identity according to each of the three actors are h e l d i n p a r a l l e l . Direct challenges are hardly ever put forward, because the different actors do not communicate w i t h or i n

r e l a t i o n   t o   each other.[192] At best, they communicate a b o u t each other in ideationally and organizationally separated spheres.

That way, movement insiders avoid confrontations with extra-movement framings that might hamper the legitimacy of movement participation. Of course, such avoidance immunizes the established collective behavior component of New Age against a destabilization through forces external to the movement. However, at the same time potential movement entrepreneurs from the new middle classes are repelled by the image of the non-professionalism of the movement as it is alleged by movement outsiders. In turn, the lack of personnel that could stimulate cognitive liberation obstructs a transformation from collective behavior to collective action.

Protagonists

Obviously, a movement (or proto-movement) must first have consolidated some collective identity before it is recognized as an entity by other (collective and individual) actors. In this sense, i n c i p i e n t movements are *per definitionem* the most proactive with respect to their collective identity. Once a rudimentary collective identity has been established, though, it depends on the corresponding actor's capability, if the identity remains to be shaped primarily by the movement itself, or if it becomes heavily influenced by external actors. In the case of New Age, the power of the protagonists to shape their identity has dwindled to say the least. Instead, the mass media and, in some cases, antagonists have gained almost exclusive definitional power over New Age's identity.

New Age's incapacity to forge a strong external identity has even affected internal definitions of New Age. Even if movement p r a c t i c e s have not changed considerably over the last two decades, the l a b e l New Age is being renounced by many movement insiders (Lewis 1992: 1, 10), in particular those who have enjoyed some professional success. I will address this problem at some length in the section on the unprofessionalism aspect of the *New Age proper frame* in the media (p. 200).

When the most exposed members of a group renounce the respective group label, then the group's capacity for collective action is in trouble. This trouble further deepens, when the ideology (and hence identity) of the group is — not only to the outside, but also within the

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[192] To be sure, fundamentalist Christians and queer nation and even less German state and *Red Army Faction* did not really communicate with each other, but rather staged a discourse to the bystander public.

group — almost exclusively constructed through *celebrities*, who act rather independently of the internal movement dynamics (Alberoni 1972; Gitlin 1980: 176). That is the case for New Age. The lack of connectivity between central movement personalities and rank-and-file members hampers collective action in two ways. First, New Age movement celebrities command over considerable embodied cultural capital, but their resources are not efficiently transferred to regular New Age participants. Second, because New Age leaders usually do not have any stake in the success or failure of collective action, they are rather interested in the continuation of their popularity within and even outside the movement, a goal that can be achieved with much less effort through aggregate individual action, in short: mass behavior. In contrast, the self-conception of new social movement leaders normally is tied to the success of collective action by these movements, as these leaders are embedded into an activist network.

Matters get worse, if one looks at the internal ideology of New Age. As was shown in the last chapter, New Age symbolism is chiefly directed at the unconnected individual (Hanegraaff 1999: 153) and offers little what would foster solidarity among New Age members. Under these circumstances, much of New Age's own definitional power over the movement has been relinquished to movement outsiders. The surrender of New Age's cognitive territory has been so thorough that one prominent protagonist — *Findhorn* founder David Spangler—recurs to an outside source, namely *Time*, when explicating New Age:

> "[A] *Time* reporter discovered, the term 'New Age' is used to encompass a multitude of activities and beliefs, not all of them consistent or even supportive of each other."[193]

Many other protagonists have resigned in their efforts to define New Age, accusing the media of a devaluation of the New Age label:

> "The term 'New Age' is used by the mainstream media to invalidate, trivialize, and diminish the serious work being done and to damage the people doing the work."[194]

Of course, not all New Agers have conceded the framing of New Age to outsiders. Protagonists who still participate in the framing of New Age recurrently use the following four framing devices that constitute what can be called the *internal New Age frame*. These framing devices are:

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[193] Spangler, David: "De-Crystallizing the New Age," *New Age Journal* 2/1997, p. 71.
[194] Williamson, Marianne, untitled, *New Age Journal* 2/1997, p. 138.

(1) New Agers are a loosely connected v a n g u a r d ,

(2) which draws on an e c l e c t i c   n u m b e r   o f   t r a d i t i o n s ,

(3) whose members i n d i v i d u a l l y practice an upcoming worldview

(4) that is more in h a r m o n y   w i t h   n a t u r e   a n d
    s p i r i t u a l i t y than the currently dominant ideologies.

Rarely is the first framing device, which locates New Age on the cutting edge of cultural developments, as explicitly spelled as in the following quote from an article on alternative dentistry in the *New Age Journal*:

> "A growing minority […] has begun poking huge holes in the traditional wisdom. While members of this increasingly confident vanguard don't question the efficacy of regular brushing, flossing and checkups, they are slowly turning the tide against water fluoridation."[195]

Most of the time it is not avantgardism that is elicited in New Age articles, but New Agers are merely seen as being part of an inevitable cultural transformation that is on the verge of becoming ideological mainstream. Frequently the New Age authors use passive verb forms, which let New Agers appear as mere carriers of an inevitably proceeding transformation:

> "The paradigmatic structures that have great influence upon belief systems on the planet a r e about to undergo drastic alterations"[196]

> "We are in a watershed in history, when the country is shifting away from the modern technocratic society towards what sociologist Paul H. Ray calls 'Integral Culture,' concerned with spiritual transformation, ecological sustainability, and the worth of the feminine. For readers who espouse these values, Ray's findings are likely to be very comforting. The standard bearers of Integral Culture […] now number 44 million. That's one quarter of the United States population."[197]

The latter quotation also nicely illustrates the popularity of the *harmony with nature* masterframe. Almost as if this excerpt was made to illustrate framing theory, the *harmony with nature* frame, embodied by ecological sustainability, is also juxtaposed to its *progress through technology* countertheme that is marked by technocracy (Gamson 1992b: 136). Here are additional examples for such proceeding:

> "Much has been written about life in the future; much fictional writing is devoted to a description, imaginatively conceived, of the life ahead for humanity. Almost without exception, these writings describe a life and environment dominated by

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[195] Dennis, Gregory: "Holistic Dentistry," *New Age Journal* 4/1997, p. 39.

[196] Wollmann, Edmond H.: "Precepts and the Integrated Persona," retrieved April 26, 2000 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage* <39071571.1795@bigfoot.com>, emphasis mine.

[197] Ray, Paul H.: "The Rise of the Cultural Creatives," *New Age Journal* 2/1997, p. 74.

technology and scientifically organized systems. A chilling, mechanistic view of the future is held before the reader [...] The time is coming when man will develop a new relation to his environment. In keeping with his sense that man, nature and God are One, he will build forms which allow him to manifest that truth."[198]

"Both the failures and successes of Western societies in the scientific-industrial era now passing can be traced to an image of ourselves and the cosmos in which the material has dominated the spiritual. The future of East and West, South and North now depends on achieving a self-image that embodies a balanced integration of the material and the spiritual so we may finally become whole persons capable of creating whole communities, and whole societies, living in harmony with nature, and consciously participating in the epic quest of the universe to know itself."[199]

"Before our 6000 years of modern civilisation, there was she, and all was one... We sure have a lot to re-discover in our so "advanced age of technology" about the harmonious symbiotic eco-system of our planet, before we thought we were smarter than nature."[200]

The last two passages also illustrate the third framing device, which portrays New Age as an eclectic synthesis of important philosophical traditions. This device purports that

"New Age philosophy is based on ancient traditions from various sources: Gnosticism, Alchemy, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, as well as Eastern philosophy. The legacy of all these traditions is sublimated in the New Age philosophy.[201]

This framing device does not draw on any masterframe and it seems that it is the device most vulnerable to outside critique. We will see that New Age's eclecticism is often treated as if exposing lack of determination or simply superficiality and ignorance. Indeed, New Age antagonists have leveled both of these criticisms against the above newsgroup posting.

"Anything can be tied to anything else if you want it to be. As a once wise man told me - "Liars figure and figures lie"."[202]

"As it is, your website [mentioned in your posting] does not exist. Could it be that this research you have done on the new age and how it relates to freemasonry is equally prepared as your website?"[203]

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[198] Seelite (seelite@concentric.net): "Life in the New Age" retrieved October 26, 1999 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <37b7670c.6660181@news.concentric.net>.

[199] ann@nonymous.net: "(article) A political and spiritual awakening," retrieved October 26, 1999 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <34d8b1a2.2400881@news.swbell.net>.

[200] SHAKTI (shakti@aol.com): "Re: Gaia Hypothesis," retrieved October 15, 1997 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <19971009190701.PAA02108@ladder02.news.aol.com>.

[201] wichm@xs4all.nl: "The roots of the New Age," retrieved May 16, 1999 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <373eec74.24403049@news.A2000.nl>.

[202] Stone, Terry: "Re: The roots of the New Age," retrieved May 17, 1999 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <373FEA33.16CBC02D@dc.jones.com>.

While these attempts at a delegitimization of New Age might curb the movement's mobilization potential, it is one of New Age's internal framing devices that posits the strongest obstacle for collective action proper by the movement. This framing device bases in what Gamson (1992b: 140) has called the *self-reliance* theme and is loosely connected to the liberal individualism masterframe. The device posits that the cultural change New Agers anticipate will come about as an evolutionary outcome of the societal developments. Individual New Agers merely reflect the foreseen transformation.

> "[T]here is a correspondence between the stages of our collective evolution as a species and the stages of our collective evolution as a species and the growth stages of individual personality. Humankind has moved through four stages […] arriving most recently at the mental, or rational, stage. It is this correspondence between human evolution and the development of individual personality that gives [the] vision of what […] will be our future."[204]

As the societal evolution will inevitably lead to a new age, there is no need to mobilize collective action proper.

> "What is important is that e a c h   i n d i v i d u a l   embarks on their   o w n   journey of learning, adventure, and discovery."[205]

At best, social change is seen as a by-product of aggregate individual action geared towards the satisfaction of individual aspirations.

> "When emotional needs are satisfied, an individual has a better chance of achieving inner peace and harmony and, consequently, society has a better chance of achieving peace between its members."[206]

Indeed, the attempt to proselytize through strong ties — the most important recruitment method for collective action proper — might even be harmful and is therefore inadvisable:

> "We cannot know whether our friends and family will awaken with us,   n o r   s h o u l d   i t   c o n c e r n   u s . […] Many misguided human beings zealously impose their ideologies on other people and in the process create dissension and

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[203] Peach Family: "Re: The roots of the New Age," retrieved May 17, 1999 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <3740935c@calwebnnrp>.

[204] Guy, David: "The World According to Wilber," *New Age Journal* 8/1995, p. 79.

[205] Jones, Paul: "What is the New Age," retrieved September 22, 1999 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <19990922133859.26739.00001631@ng-fi1.aol.com>, emphasis mine.

[206] John WorldPeace: "New Age Gays," retrieved November 18, 1999 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <19991118083726.09052.00000524@ng-fl1.aol.com>.

mediocrity. The Aquarian Age concerns itself with unity not conformity. It deals in discovering, living and sharing our uniqueness with each other."[207]

It almost follows that New Age should not engage in collective action proper. Indeed, one successful New Age entrepreneur even expressly cautions on the erection of a full-fledged movement:

> "The New Age movement itself is somewhat of a paradox, since to organize into some kind of "movement" could be considered to be contrary to the fundamentals of individual spiritual development."[208]

New Age's claims for individualism at times even consider reality the product of independent individual minds, each of which creates a separate reality.

> "There is no "thats the way it will be for everyone" because each and every individual LIVES ON A DIFFERENT EARTH."[209]

The perception that each person individually shapes her or his reality can also be used to conceal power relationships. The following definition from a New Age newsgroup posting is a remarkable illustration for this situation:

> "Disempowerment -- Addiction to the concept that physical reality exists only outside of the individual."[210]

This definition, of course, looks as if deliberately manufactured for an illustration of Lukes' (1974: 24ff) critique of the two-dimensional concept of power. What could more effectively conceal, even literally "define away" existing power relationships than a notion power that considers all grievances constructions of the individual mind?

In conclusion, the rudimentary internal New Age identity is averse towards collective action proper in two ways: It deems independent individual action as sufficient precursor for the upcoming societal transformation, and it conceals power relationships by considering grievances as induced by the individual mind. But there is also an "advantage" to such an

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[207] TM Clearlt: "A Simple Message," retrieved August 12, 1999 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <19990812191901.06221.00000290@ng-fe1.aol.com>; emphasis mine.

[208] Lutts, Andrew: "New Age: Frequently Asked Questions," <http://www.salemctr.com/newage/center1.html>, April 30, 2000.

[209] Wollmann, Edmond H.: "Neptune in Aquarius," retrieved January 19, 2000 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <388555C2.2FC3@netscape.net>.

[210] Anonymous: "Re: Self Edmooverpowering Stench," retrieved December 1, 1999 from newsgroup: *talk.religion.newage*, <3845D85E.CD86EE98@pacbell.net>.

identity. Namely, it does not elicit the mobilization of effective countermovements, as the following section will show.

Antagonists

One can roughly distinguish between three groups that are antagonized by New Age. These are the anti-cult movement, fundamentalist Christians, and so-called skeptics. In addition, some German anti-fascists charge New Age with the revival of Aryan religion, which was sponsored by the Nazis (Hexham & Poewe 1999: 213).[211] None of these movements or pressure groups is a typical countermovement, since all of these groups existed prior to New Age and simply extended their scope onto New Age, which is regarded as just another aspect of a larger evil. That evil consists of all new religious movements for the anti-cult movement, secularization for fundamentalist Christians and the traditional occult for skeptics. The following three sections will discuss, how New Age has been incorporated into these different antagonistic framings. I will restrict my discussion here to the two most influential adversaries of New Age, the anti-cult movement and fundamentalist Christians.

The Secular Anti-Cult Movement

The anti-cult movement is the most vocal of all antagonists. In comparison to New Age, the anti-cult movement depends far more on formally organized associations. Its organizational origins lie in the first oppositional groups to the *Children of God* (Shupe & Bromley 1980: 88). After the bankruptcy of the *Cult Awareness Network* (CAN) led to its incorporation into *Scientology*, today the most important North American organizational carrier of the anti-cult movement is the *American Family Foundation* (AFF). The *Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme* (FECRIS) is an umbrella organization of various anti-cult groups in Western Europe. These and similar organizations focus on alleged psychological abuses committed by cults.

Recruitment Pool

Most anti-cult movement participants are either relatives and former friends of current cult members or disgruntled apostates. As family units are particularly threatened by cult involvement (Richardson, Kilbourne & Van Driel 1989: 46f), close relatives of cult members are overproportionally drawn into the anti-cult movement. Of course, former friends and

family members almost always share the class background with the converts. Thus, anti-cult movement and new religious movements are not only antagonists but also competitors which recruit from similar social-structural locations of recruits. As the structural location of movement recruits is the most upstream variable in my theoretical model, anti-cult movement and New Age should face similar obstacles on their road to collective action. And they do. Just like New Age, the anti-cult movement mainly consists of collective behavior, not collective action proper. Just like New Agers, anti-cultists almost exclusively strive for individual goals, read: selective incentives.

> "[M]ost of those whom the anti-cult associations [count] as members in reality were seeking rather than offering assistance. [… T]his situation presented an enormous drain on organizational resources." (Shupe & Bromley 1980: 106)

Without an *esprit de corps* and lacking the organizational and financial resources similar to the ones new middle class movements can draw on, the anti-cult movement in North America struggled on its way to build a viable organization on the national level (Shupe & Bromley 1980: 109-112).[212] Analogous to New Age, albeit to a lesser extent, many anti-cult movement leaders are petty entrepreneurs, who depend on disgruntled relatives, friends and former cult members as customers.[213]

The class origin of the anti-cult movement, just like its antagonists, also hampers access to two important actors rooted in different social strata, that is, mass media and the academy. Initially, during the late Seventies, anti-cult movement rhetorics had become legitimated on campus (Shupe & Bromley 1980: 192f). As time wore on, however, social scientific studies on the anti-cult movement's central tenet — the brainwashing metaphor — proliferated. With these studies, the empirical paucity of the brainwashing thesis became apparent. As a result, relations with the academe were severed. In present-day sociology of religion, the rejection of the brainwashing thesis has become that omnipresent (e.g.,Bader & DeMaris 1996: 285f; Heelas 1996: 194f; Robbins 1988: 72); some scholars have even speculated that a financial dependency of new religious movement scholars on their objects of study has obfuscated

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[211] The allegation that ethno-nationalist ideas resonate in New Age writings (Bhatt 1999) is not untrue, but can best be understood by the generally high (Billig 1995) resonances for ethno-nationalism.

[212] In many West European states, the situation was somewhat alleviated through the existing alliances between state polities and the anti-cult movement.

[213] See, e.g., Bromley & Shupe's (1980: 135f) account of Patrick's incipient career as a deprogrammer.

scholarly analysis of morally illegitimate practices (Zablocki 1997).[214] In turn, anti-cultists have become alienated from social science. Consider, for example, how an anti-cultist reviews the most comprehensive scholarly anthology on New Age to date (Lewis & Melton 1992):

> "The authors neglect or omit entirely: the destructive and exploitative practices of some (not all) New Age groups; their misuse of sex, power, and money; their criminal records; and their commercial scams. There is slight mention in this volume either of deceptive recruiting, coercive persuasion, and value inversion, or of the efforts of the anti-cult movement to educate and inform (for example, there are no citations of the *Cultic Studies Journal*. I wish a chapter or two had been added on how deceptive recruiting, coercive persuasion, and value inversion, or of the efforts of the anti-cult movement to educate and inform. I wish a chapter or two had been added on how New Age language and philosophies are used unscrupulously by con artists to entrap and exploit gullible counterculture." (Dole 1993)

While anti-cult rhetorics have considerably lost credibility in science, the mass media still incorporate modified versions of frames developed by the anti-cult movement. However, due to the class distance, the media seldom give anti-cult spokespersons directly a voice. The reason why media framings of New Age nevertheless often resemble anti-cult movement framings lie instead in the high cultural resonances the brainwashing metaphor elicits. What are the central tenets of the brainwashing model?

The Brainwashing Metaphor

The brainwashing model lies at the center of anti-cult movement ideology. The model has been developed with respect to the more formally organized new religious movements, such as the *Children of God*, ISKCON, the *Unification Church*, or *Scientology*. Anti-cultists believe that cults command over powerful psychological techniques. With the help of such techniques, cults are able to force prospective recruits under their influence and subsequently control much of the latter's behavior. A relatively sober, academic account of this transformation reads:

> "A variety of devices are employed in [*est/Forum*] to intensify forces operating on potential converts. The 'training' is carried out in protracted sessions where

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[214] In the same vein, though, one might suspect the relative popularity of the brainwashing concept in psychology of being a result of the potential financial revenues, which could result from deprogramming by psychologists. However, even among academic psychologists the validity of the brainwashing thesis has become a minority opinion d e s p i t e   i t s   p o s s i b l e   benefit for the profession. This unpopularity testifies to the fragility of the brainwashing thesis, as does the meta-analysis of psychological studies by Rochford and his associates (Rochford, Purvis & Eastman 1989).

disagreement with is actively discouraged, often by harsh verbal abuse. Little respite is afforded from the intensity of the group experience, and the training setting includes as many as two hundred potential converts herded together in a large hall, with their behavior tightly controlled." (Galanter 1989: 102)

Once somebody has become a cult member, he or she is deprived of his or her personal freedom through "mind control," at times also physical coercion. According to anti-cult rhetorics, cults *program* their adherents; they become incapable of acting according to their "genuine" intentions.

"Indeed, the charge of massive mental encroachment without knowledge and consent of the afflicted persons is perhaps the most important charge against cults. This encroachment does not only tarnish critical reason. It also removes or inhibits probably the facility of the individual to freely make any decisions."[215]

Allegedly, even professional psychologists are not able to withstand the power of cultists. Consider this apostate account:

"A well known psychiatrist and a psychologist went undercover to study the [New Age] cult I was in. They both concluded that the leader of the group used strong hypnosis techniques as well as techniques that were mentally abusive. The psychiatrist had a psychotic break the evening after his visit. He had to be hospitalized. […] All the journals and studies you read will never, ever give you the knowledge to know what we have been through."[216]

Therefore, exit from a cult regularly requires the assistance of a third party, a "professional" *deprogrammer* or a less zealous *exit counselor*, who is familiar with the mind control techniques utilized by the cult. This deprogrammer applies a different set of powerful psychological techniques that free the cult member from the malign influence of the cult.

"When deprogramming has been accomplished, the cult member's appearance undergoes a sharp, drastic change. He comes out of his trancelike state and his ability to think for himself is restored." (Conway & Siegelman 1995)

If necessary, some deprogrammers even operate against the explicit will of cult members, although the number of such forcible removals from cults has declined in the wake of legal setbacks against overzealous deprogrammers.

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[215] Aktion für Geistige und Psychische Freiheit (ed.): "Infos über Sekten, Kulte und den Psychomarkt," <http://home.t-online.de/AGPF.Bonn/agpfbonn.htm>, March 21, 1999, translation mine.

[216] Posted on April 25, 1997 by skye@comcat.com to among others *talk.religion.newage* and *alt.support.ex-cult*.

New Age as a Cult

Even in the cases of those new religious movements that triggered the development of this "theory," it has gained no empirical support (Melton forthcoming). There is no evidence that coercion exists within cults more frequently than in other environments (Rochford, Purvis & Eastman 1989) and the high volatility of cult membership (Barker 1989: 152) contradicts allegations of mind control. Indeed, "brainwashing" is a concept that is so much at odds with empirical reality, that it can best be characterized as a *metaphor* (Shupe & Bromley 1980: 70ff). Consequently, even scholars who are highly critical of the new religious movements admit that brainwashing cannot explain recruitment to cults (Balch 1980; Guyaard 1996). Nevertheless, the brainwashing metaphor still enjoys credibility outside the academy and fuels the anti-cult movement

The scope of the theory has been extended to New Age, although New Age in particular does not fit the brainwashing hypothesis (Heelas 1996: 194f; Johnston 1980: 347f; Robbins 1988: 70-72; Jackson & Bainbridge inStark & Bainbridge 1985: 290-294).[217] Specifically, most New Agers maintain only contractual relationships with their organizations, which designates memberships from the start as temporary (Bromley 1997: 128). This temporality prohibits the formation of strong ties in Granovetter's (1973) sense. Such strong ties, though, would be necessary to achieve the degree of control cults exert over their members according to the anti-cult movement.

The allegation that new religious movements engage in mind control techniques, which eliminate exit and voice options of recruits, is chiefly levied against New Age's mass organizations, *Transcendental Meditation* and *est/Forum*.[218] This is hardly suprising, as for

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[217] With respect to the *Findhorn* community Castro (1996: 34) disagrees. However, I would consider his monograph despite its academic pretensions a product of the anti-cult movement.

[218] There are also some academic treatises that support the brainwashing hypothesis with respect to *est/Forum*. However, such expert opinions almost exclusive are written by psychologists and psychiatrists, to whom *est/Forum* might be considered a competitor. Other social scientists, in particularly sociologists, who do not have vested interests in the debunking of new religious movements are far more skeptical of the brainwashing thesis. While this observation hints already at the tenacity of academic support for the thesis, a look at the substance of the scholarship that supports the thesis sheds even more doubt on the validity of the brainwashing conjecture. Galanter (1989: 81), for instance, dismisses positive psychological evaluations of *est/Forum* by scholars, who have conducted fieldwork within the organization as follows:

> "Psychological sophistication does not seem to breed skepticism among those exposed to the [*est/Forum*] program. In a study of est alumni, for example, there was no significant difference in the proportion of professional therapists or lay-people who gave positive reports. In another study, an experienced clinician evaluated a series of his psychiatric patients to took the est training and concluded the majority derived some benefit from the program." This way, counter-evidence to the

the alleged authoritarianism at least some formal organization seems essential. Typical statements framed by anti-cultist on *est/Forum* and *TM* read:

> "For long, cult experts have cautioned against a participation at *Forum* seminars - because *Landmark* employs methods of mind control the individual hardly ever can escape. […] After reading the [anti-*est/Forum*] book, one grasps why even highly intelligent persons are deceived by *Landmark*, and why it is extremely difficult to dodge the heinous psycho-methods utilized by the *Forum*."[219]

> "My cult involvement was included in a cultic relationship […] in the WE&A[220] organization."[221]

> "Even the most 'benign spiritual groups around' [*TM*] can convert a person who previously had good powers of critical thinking into a gullible person who will accept without question what appear to be wild claims."

> […]

> The process of how thinking people can gradually be sucked into cults and start to lose their desire to question things must have been well researched."[222]

Above quotations illustrate, why the anti-cult movement's cult frame is so alluring for apostates and abandoned friends and family of new religious movement members. The brainwashing metaphor relieves recruits and their prior environment of all responsibility in the conversion. If "highly intelligent" persons "who previously had good powers of critical thinking" are deceived through cult techniques, then conversion to a cult is surely independent of actions and believes of former friends and family and the recruit himself.

While New Age's mass organizations are primary targets of anti-cult rhetorics, debunking of central New Age figures also takes place. For example, the anti-cult group *Tracenet.org*

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harmfulness of *est/Forum* is redefined as an indication for the powerfulness of the brainwashing practices. Scholars, who enter *est/Forum* also adopt the organization's viewpoint because they have been brainwashed. Under such assumptions it seems hard to falsify Galanter's theory. Interestingly, Galanter himself did not conduct any field research on *est/Forum* citing the lack of "a viable basis for a study" due to the ideological stance of his est contact person (*ibid.*). Instead, he relies on a *Time* magazine article to illustrate his case (*ibid.*, p. 207, n. 35).

[219] Schwertfeger, Bärbel: "Der Psychokonzern: Protokoll einer Gehirnwäsche," *stern* 16/96, April 1996, p.146.

[220] *WE&A* (Werner Erhard and Associates) is a derogatory acronym for *est (erhard seminar training)* and its successor organization, *Landmark Forum*. It alludes to the fact that most defectors of this organization, do no longer consider it a religion, but rather a business void of any spirituality.

[221] Posted on April 25, 1997 by p.fitz@worldnet.att.net to *inter alia talk.religion.newage* and *alt.support.ex-cult*.

[222] Newsgroup message from Mabel <mabel@clear.net.nz>, newsgroups: alt.meditation.transcendental; alt.meditation; alt.support.ex-cult; talk.religion.newage; alt.conspiracy; alt.religion.scientology; alt.buddha.short.fat.guy; talk.religion.buddhism; alt.yoga; alt.religion.unification; alt.psychology; alt.mind-control alt.christnet; Subject: Re: "I'm a cult veteran -- and I'm one tough son of a bitch," April 24, 1997, 09:51:42 GMT.

dedicates a webzine to Deepak Chopra. It is entitled *Shameless Mind* — an allusion to Chopra's best-seller *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind* — and depicts Chopra as an immoral deceiver, even alleging he would solicit sexual favors from adherents. A 1998 issue, for instance, claims that

> "[a]lthough the allegations of frequenting prostitutes have been retracted, Matt Lasbash's reporting on Chopra's alleged multiple plagiarism has proved prophetic"[223]

Chopra's reaction to this claim is framed, as if he would exert undue power:

> "Removed 2/27/98 under threat of legal action from Deepak Chopra's legal team,"[224]

it says in bold letters.

But not only specific New Age figures are accused of plagiarism or brainwashing. Often the vagueness of the New Age concept is taken as a starting point for depicting New Age as phenomenon difficult to tackle. This ambiguity is interpreted as strategy to elude criticism and to conceal the powerfulness and danger of the movement. For instance, the anti-cult organization AFF concedes that

> "[t]he [New Age movement …] is too "fuzzy" and disparate to constitute a great conspiracy, as some have claimed. Nor is it a cult, although cults exist within the New Age movement."[225]

AFF nevertheless still includes New Age as a topic in their "Resources About Cults and Psychological Manipulation" guide. Allegedly, New Age's "concepts have permeated our culture in a quiet, almost invisible way."[226] Thus, the AFF does not name any specific New Age practices, groups or individuals that would qualify as being harmful, but uses the amorphousness of New Age to depict the latter's overall impact as worthless and even hideous.

Christian Fundamentalists

Christian fundamentalists are also antagonized by New Age. Fundamentalist Christians are even less interested in a analysis of the empirical reality of New Age than the anti-cult movement (Hexham 1999). Instead, they mainly stabilize their own identity through attacks

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[223] <http://www.trancenet.org/chopra/>, December 2, 1998.

[224] *Ibid.*

[225] Langone, Michael D.: "What is 'New Age'?," <http://www.csj.org/rg/rgessays/rgessay_newage.htm>, March 10, 1999.

on New Age. Fundamentalist Christians search for antagonists; one of them "happens" to be the New Age movement (Wuthnow & Lawson 1994: 40).

As idiosyncratic as the reason for the fundamentalist Christian interest in New Age are their discourses about movement. Most fundamentalist Christian frames are keyed on frames found in the bible (Harding 1994: 60). New Age is no exception in this respect. Starting from the premise that New Age is just another manifestation of the growing secularization of society, the view that New Age is a further attempt by the devil to deceive Christianity is bolstered:

> "The rise in popularity of the New Age, the occult and false religions should be a signal to us that millions of people are spiritually hungry. The devil is exploiting their need and deceiving them."[227]

> "The New Ager […] is still listening to the lie of the devil who spoke to Eve and said she would be like God (Gen. 3:5)."[228]

> "'Many Christians who have become involved with *Toronto* [a New Age group] have assumed that it 'must be of God' because it often results in inner healing or other spiritual experiences. However, such occurrences are certainly not proof that this movement is of God. In fact, the devil specializes in providing virtually identical experiences in occult and New Age groups right around the world.'"[229]

> "Are people being lured into participating into nothing more than a massive planetary devil feast [on Earth Day]? You'll remember the Harmonic Convergence of Aug. 16-17, 1987. They met at various locations around the US — new agers — thousands of them around the globe. […] Some 'ohmed;' some chanted; others had witchcraft ceremonies, incantations to spirit guides. My understanding from what I read is that some actually cried out '666 come forth and seize dominion of this globe.'"[230]

> "'Satan always tells half-truths, just enough to make an unknowing person accept his lies as truth.' The New Age Movement's call to go towards the light was deceptive, [Ismay Cartwright at the New Testament Church of God] argued, and led people away from Jesus Christ."[231]

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[226] I*bid.*

[227] McGuire, Paul: "Hooked on Hollywood Religion," <http://www.charismamag.com:80/stories/cn196105.htm>, March 14, 1997.

[228] Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry (ed.): "The New Age Movement," <http://www2.connectnet.com/users/mslick/nawhatis.htm>, February 12, 1997.

[229] Strom, Andrew: "The 'Toronto' Controversy - Disturbing New Facts From History," <http://crash.ihug.co.nz/~revival>, February 5, 1997.

[230] Marrs, Texe: "Earth Day," <http://www.prophezine.com/search/database/is6.3.html>, January 11, 1999.

[231] Burgess, Don: "What is the New Age Movement," <http://www.bermudasun.org:80/issues/feb2/age.html>, February 12, 1997.

> "After leaving the New Age movement I realized that a demon was oppressing me."[232]

Rhetorics evoking the devil and particular bible passages hardly resonate well with most non-fundamentalists, who do not command over an extensive knowledge of the bible. Consequently, most mainstream media do not lent a voice to these views on New Age. If they occasionally do, it is not uncommon that the fundamentalist view is openly debunked. For instance, referring to attacks on New Age by fundamentalist Christians, the *Los Angeles Times* questions the knowledgeability of the latter:

> "A lot of them have only the vaguest notions of what New Age beliefs encompass."[233]

Thus, fundamentalist Christians interpretations of New Age do not play a major role in media constructions of the movement. The same applies to the influence of fundamentalist Christian standpoints onto New Age's internal movement definitions. The former's allegations neither fit the actual empirical reality of the movement, nor do many New Agers understand the fundamentalist jargon. Thus, it is not difficult for movement insiders to ignore fundamentalist rhetorics, which they actually do (Melton [1986] 1992: 177). Hence, the fundamentalist Christian discourses on New Age identity are not part of the New Age identity field. Consequently, they can largely be ignored in subsequent analyses.

The State

In the theoretical part of this thesis have argued with Tilly (1978) and many others that the state is p o t e n t i a l l y the most powerful actor in the repression of collective action. This does not only apply to the physical repression of protest activities, but also to the identity construction of a movement, albeit arguably to a lesser extent. Not only does every state possess its own propaganda apparatus as well as a potentially very powerful intelligence service (Marx 1979: 97-100). The state can also use legal classification to shape the public image of a movement. These three institutions can all exert influence on identity discourses. In addition, the state usually maintains excellent ties to the media, the major actors of the external construction of collective identity.

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[232] <http://web.idirect.com/~bhph95/newage2.htm>, February 20, 1997.

[233] Hall, Carla: "Tehachapi's Mind Trip: Small Town Warily Watches as the New Age Blooms in its Midst," *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 1996, p.A-3.

In the case of New Age, however, there are huge differences across states, in how far this potential influence is actually exerted. Two extreme cases are the US, which are essentially silent on New Age, and Germany, where New Age, like virtually all new religious movements and other minority religions, has drawn a massive amount of communicative action by the state. Most other Western industrialized states lie somewhere inbetween these two cases, on the whole they tend to be closer to the US, (Beckford 1981b; Hexham 1998). More specifically, Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom seem to have adopted a non-partisan stance (Sveriges Socialdepartementet 1998a: 19; Sveriges Socialdepartementet 1998b: 3). Italy, while having just released a police reports on cults, also seems to drift towards non-involvement. On the other end of the continuum, Austria seems to follow more closely Germany's policies. France and Belgium have adopted an even stiffer stance towards new religious movements including New Age. Following the *Temple Solaire* mass suicide, these two states recently commissioned reports on new religions that have led to access of anti-cult groups to the French and Belgian states (Introvigne 1998: 16; Sveriges Socialdepartementet 1998a: 19). Apparently, Greece is also very repressive towards new religious movements (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 109). Here I will focus regarding the proactive states on Germany, while the *laissez faire* policies will be represented by the US.

The US Polity

In the US, the state is basically acquiescent to New Age and other new religious movements (Hexham & Poewe 1999: 209). In fact, some anti-cult groups and even at times even the media maintain that parts of the state collaborate with New Age and have incorporated New Age practices into their policies. For instance, the 1987 establishment of the *California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem, Personal and Social Responsibility* by the State Legislature has widely been viewed as an inroad of the New Age movement into politics, which in turn has elicited numerous criticisms. According to the *New York Times*, the Task Force was created upon lobbying efforts "by John Vasconcellos, a Democratic Assemblyman and a national leader of the so-called New Age Movement."[234] For some fundamentalist Christians,

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[234] Lindsey, Robert: "A Bid For, Ah, Self-Esteem," *New York Times* February 23, 1987, p. A12.

it is then a small step to claim that "[t]he New Age movement also has been successful in influencing government at the highest levels."[235]

While this is certainly an exaggeration, it seems reasonable to conclude, that New Age is not excessively targeted in a repressive fashion by US state authorities. This silence of the state, we will see, does not only have an independent effect on the identity construction processes, but also limits the power of the anti-cult movement on the perception of other movement antagonists by the bystander public and mass media, although to a lesser extent than many media theorists would suggests.

The German Polity

In contrast to the *laissez faire* approach in the US, the German polity on almost all levels intervenes in the discourse on new religious movements in general and New Age in particular. All German states except Bremen[236] employ separate departments (*Referate*), which gather and disseminate information on "cults" (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 61). On the federal level, the federal administrative office (*Bundesverwaltungsamt*) contains a department on "youth religions and psycho groups," which collects and analyzes data on new religious movements (*ibid.*). During the 13th legislative period (1994-1998), parts of these analyses have been disseminated by the Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth as "information material."

The German state and most of its (political) incumbents consider new religious movements an important social force. With almost unanimous support in the federal parliament a parliamentary expert commission on new religious movements (hereafter: *Enquête-Kommission*)[237] launched in 1996. This commission was to assess *inter alia*

   – the dangers these groups might pose;
   – the cults' "open and concealed" goals;

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[235] McGuire, Paul: "Hooked on Hollywood Religion," <http://www.charismamag.com:80/stories/ cn196105.htm>, March 10, 1997.

[236] In Bremen, a citizen's information office (*Bürgerberatung*) on new religious movements exists instead.

[237] The literal translation would be "so-called sects and groups concerned with non-academic psychology. However, the term *Sekte* has acquired a different meaning from its Anglo-Saxon counterpart "sect" in everyday language. While "sect" is a relatively value-neutral term for groups that have developed out of a schism of a major church, *Sekte* is a derogatory term for a religious or pseudo-religious groups, whose lifestyle differs markedly from the one of the surrounding environment. Thus, *Sekten* are what many social scientists consider "cults" (Stark & Roberts 1982: 54; Stark & Bainbridge 1997: 104) terminology. *Psychogruppe* is a derogatory term for those groups that offer psychological support outside the realm of professionally certified psychology.

– the limits of these groups to appeal to the constitutional provision for freedom in the choice of religion.[238]

A look at this list immediately reveals the viewpoint of the German polity towards new religions. By and large, the framing of new religious movements by lawmakers and administrators is congruent with the that by antagonists of the new religions; they are considered a threat for individuals and society. This alliance between state and antagonists is also reflected in the personal and organizational relationships between these actors. For instance, three of the twelve expert members of the *Enquête-Kommission* are Christian church officials; a fourth one is a member of the professional association for psychologists. One third of the experts thus is affiliated with competitors of new religious movements and has interests in the latters' restriction by the state.[239] An additional three expert members seem to harbor strong reservations against new religious movements, as they maintain that

> "the [unspecified] most conflict driven groups […] despite their divergence attempts — often transported through the mass media — trivialization by dispassionate or badly informed persons […] not only try to 'enchant' individuals with their ideology, but also endeavor to establish their values as political premises in Germany." (Caberta y Diaz et al. 1998: 157, translation mine).

As will be shown below (section 0) at least the role attributed to the mass media not only lacks concrete empirical support, but in fact flies in the face of empirical reality.

In contrast to the forum the state grants to cult critics, no members of new religious groups were represented in the *Enquête-Kommission*. The influence of these groups on the Commission was confined to the appearance in some hearings. Thus, they were essentially treated as if being defendants in a court case. Worse than in some criminal trials, though, they were not even granted the right to review the files generated by the *Enquête-Kommission*, a procedure that the *Church of Scientology* took as a justification not to appear at the hearings at all.

On this background, it is hardly surprising that many anti-cult groups receive some form of state support (Hexham & Poewe 1999: 209) and that the state refers citizens (and journalists) interested in new religious movements to Christian churches, professional

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[238] Deutscher Bundestag - Drucksache 13/4477, June 19, 1996.

[239] Richardson, Kilbourne & Van Driel (1989) additional interests health-care professionals might have in the stigmatization of new religious movements.

associations of the medical professions and formal organizations of the anti-cult movement (e.g. Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Schule, Jugend und Sport 1997: Section 10.1).

I cannot trace the development of the coalition between state and anti-cult activists here, but for present purposes it is sufficient to affirm that it does exist. Which consequences does this alliance entail for New Age framings by the state?

Incorporation of New Age within the New Religious Movement Phenomenon

To begin with, the state like other New Age antagonists, situates New Age within the larger phenomenon of the deviant new religious movements (Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Schule, Jugend und Sport 1997: Section 7.5; Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 47).[240] The concept of new religious movements (*sogenannte Sekten und Psychogruppen* in the official terminology[241]) is for the German (and Austrian) state even more inclusive and amorphous than the one that can be found in the Anglo-Saxon social science literature on the subject. As I have discussed in greater detail in section 2.2.3, the social scientific term of new religious movements encompasses already such disparate groups as New Age, *Scientology*, the *Unification Church*, ISKCON, *Heaven's Gate, et al.* While these groups vary among others in organizational form, origin of their constituency, and degree of social control, they do share the relatively recent emergence in the second half of this century and a relatively novel belief system. The German state includes on top of these groups also long-established sects advocating rather traditional variations of Christian beliefs such as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and even Protestant denominations (so-called *Freikirchen*) not affiliated with the major Protestant churches in Germany (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 15; Köster-Loßback & Seiwert 1998: 160f). About the only commonality of these groups seems to be their

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[240] So does the state-operated *Informationsstelle für Sekten* in Schleswig-Holstein (<http://www.schleswig-holstein.de:80/_landsh/landesreg/staatskanzlei/sekten_01.html>), November 11, 1998. State institutions in Austria do likewise, as the brochure "Heilende Schwingungen und Astralkräfte" [Healing Vibrations and Astral Power] published by the *Niederösterreichische Landestelle für Sektenfragen* (<http://www.noel.gv.at/service/f/f3/schwingu.htm>, October 27, 1998) shows.

[241] Although the *Enquête-Kommission* itself is dissatisfied with the German everyday term of *Sekten und Psychogruppen* and acknowledges that in the social scientific literature "new religious movements" (*neue religiöse und weltanschauliche Bewegungen*) is commonly used for the groups in question (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 17), it does not adopt this terminology. In fact, it is difficult to clearly discern even a clear-cut definition of the *sogenannte Sekten und Psychogruppen* category. *De jure* this category seems to apply only to those cults in Stark & Bainbridge's (1997: 104) sense that engage in practices that are suspected to violate Article 1 of the German constitution (*Grundgesetz*) that is concerned with human dignity. *De facto* it applies basically to all new religious movements and many traditional sects.

competition with the major Christian churches in Germany.[242] In combination with the close personal and institutional ties to the mainstream churches, the hypothesis that the latter heavily influenced the construction of the new religious movement concept as it is employed by the state is at least not easily to dismiss.

Although state reports give lipservice to the inadequacy of this terminology and acknowledge the diversity of goals and practices of the groups in question (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 154),[243] implicitly the new religious movement category is applied to discredit all groups that commonly — that is, in everyday germanophone discourse and in the terminology adopted by many state officials — are subsumed under the label. The belief of the dissenting parliamentary faction of the Green party that the "the complete sector of the new religious […] minorities is confronted with improper suspicion"[244] by the state, is not unfounded, if one looks at the more informally generated statements of the new religious movements experts of the major German parties. In an online discussion on the work of the *Enquête-Kommission*, its Christian Democrat executive officer, Ortrun Schätzle, reacts to the anonymously made statement:

> "The actions of the federal government a g a i n s t sects and stuff like that [, i.e., what is considered to be new religious movements in the sociological sense and beyond,] is to be welcomed, no matter what. Do not become 'intimidated' by the US"

flatly with

> "Thank you for your support. We appreciate it."[245]

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[242] To be sure, on an ideological plane there are other competitors to the major Catholic and Protestant churches. Among those are Islam, Judaism, agnosticism, atheism and Orthodox Christianity. In a rational choice framework, there are good reasons to exclude these groups as targets from the viewpoint from the perspective of the churches. These are:

- powerful inter-state or (international) inter-faith allies of the group (Muslims, Jews, orthodox Christians)
- the targeting would not resonate well on the historical background (Jews, orthodox Christians)
- the conversion potential from the churches to the group is low (Jews, Muslims)
- the conversion potential to the churches from the group is low (atheists, agnostics)
- there are powerful intra-states allies (here: the scientific community) of the group (agnostics, atheists).

[243] See also *supra nota* 241.

[244] *Bundestagsfraktion Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen*, press release 0359/98, <http://www.gruenebt.de/archiv/pm/1998/98-0359.htm>, October 24, 1998 (translation mine).

[245] Online Conference "Was gehen den Staat die Sekten an," <http://www.bundestag.de/blickpkt/arch_trs/schaeor.htm>, October 24, 1998, emphasis and translation mine.

Similarly, her Social Democrat deputy, Renate Rennebach, answers to a different anonymously submitted question, which new religious movements beside *Scientology* might be dangerous with:

> "The danger different groups pose has certainly different origins and therefore is not comparable [across groups] and [one] needs to differentiate meticulously. Still, I would [consider], for example, the groups *Universal Life, Fiat Lux*, but also smaller groups, such as neo germanic and neo pagan groups, (very?) dangerous, [but] for a conclusive categorization, let us wait for the final report [of the *Enquête-Kommission*]."[246]

Note, that Rennebach merely suggests to differentiate different o r i g i n s and d e g r e e s of dangerousness, but does not question t h a t new religious movements on the whole do pose a threat. Tellingly, the Commission report does not contain the anticipated list that would specify the groups that supposedly pose threats. That in fact such specification would not fit the approach Rennebach (and most other Commission members and state officials) have taken, becomes clear in a later press communique. In this communique, Rennebach further blurs the distinction between different new religious movements alleging that:

> "[t]here are currently an estimated 600 so-called *Sekten und Psychogruppen* comprising about two million members. Including their relatives, six to seven million persons [in Germany] are affected. A m u l t i p l i c i t y o f t h e s e g r o u p s i s c o n s i d e r e d e x t r e m e l y d a n g e r o u s . These groups promise personal well-being, fortune, and soul healing. With the help of manipulative techniques, they instead elicit exactly the contrary scenario, namely dependence, social isolation, destruction of families, financial ruin or even child abuse."[247]

Thus, it is insinuated that most groups are a potential menace and state action against at least some of the groups appears to be justified.

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[246] Online Conference "Was gehen den Staat die Sekten an," <http://www.bundestag.de/blickpkt/arch_trs/ rennere.htm>, October 24, 1998, translation mine. The original text contains numerous grammatical and logical mistakes, it reads:

> "Die Gefährlichkeit der Gruppen hat sicherlich unterschiedliche Ursachen und ist von daher auch nicht vergleichbar und sehr differenziert zu sehen. Als gefährlich würde ich schon z.B. die Gruppe Universelles Leben, Fiat Lux und auch kleinere Gruppen wie die neugermanischen/neuheidnischen Gruppen aber um eine endgültige Einstufung vornehmen zu können, lassen Sie uns noch ein bißchen forschen."

[247] Rennebach, Renate: "Was gehen den Staat die Sekten an?," <http://www.bundestag.de/blickpkt/arch_onl/ renne.htm>, 30 October, 1998, translation and emphasis mine. In view of such statements, it appears plausible to assume that Rennebach "seem[s] to be making a career of attacking minority religions" (Hexham 1998).

The lipservice to differentiation completely vanishes, when the state discourses are appropriated by outspoken antagonists of new religious movements. Even the in comparison to anti-cult movement and fundamentalist Christians usually subdued criticism of the new religions by the major churches (Shupe & Bromley 1980: 59) becomes zealous through reinterpretation of state action. In this vein, the cult expert of the Catholic German Bishops' Conference and *Enquête-Kommission* member Hans Gasper remarks:

> "The *Enquête-Kommission* serves a twofold purpose. On the one hand, politicians are interested in what is happening in our society. Overstepping of ethical boundaries as in the mass suicides by the *Temple Solaire* in Switzerland and France, the poison gas assault by the AUM sect in Japan or the tragic ending of the police attack on the Branch Davidians in Waco, TX merit sufficient reason for politicians to consider the question of sects."[248]

Preceding the above quote, Gasper has explicitly identified some New Age practices (I Ching, tarot, astrology, meditation) as part of the new religiosity the *Enquête-Kommission* is researching. Adopting state discourses and actions and supported by the state, this New Age antagonist attempts to depict all new religious movements as extremely dangerous, even life threatening. In comparison, the pope's encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* uses a far more moderate tone with respect to New Age:

> "[V]arious kinds of esoteric superstition [are] widespread today, even among some believers who lack a proper critical sense." (John Paul II 1998)

Here, New Age and the traditional occult have been separated from other new religious movements. The impact of esotericism as "superstition" is considered detrimental, but by no means physically life-threatening. What is more, only to naïve persons seem to be affected by esoteric beliefs, which diminishes the perceived threat these groups pose. Thereby, it does not provides a rationale for state interventions.[249]

In sum, the following observations have been made:

> *Observation 6-3*: In Germany (and Belgium, France, Austria), state discourses on new religious movements are intertwined with the discourses generated by non-state antagonists of the movements on the ideological, personal and organizational planes.

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[248] Gassper, Hans: "Boom auf dem Sekten- und Psychomarkt: Gleichzeitig entwickelt sich eine neue Religiösität," [The market for sects and alternative psychology is booming: Concomitantly a new religiosity develops], .*Kolpingblatt* 7/1998, <http://kolping.de/zentral/news/kbvorab/sekte07.html>, October 26, 1998.

[249] Interestingly, the German cardinal Joseph Ratzinger does consider New Age far more dangerous, as he considers the New Age teachings of the formerly Catholic priest Matthew Fox as "dangerous and deviant (Zaleski, Carol: "Bring Back the Ecstasy," *New York Times*, January 15, 1989, p. 7/12.

Observation 6-4: New Age is compounded with other new religious movements and traditional sects into an amorphous category of *sogenannte Sekten und Psychogruppen* ("so-called sects and groups concerned with non-academic psychology") by most actors in the German and Austrian polities. As a whole, the former groups are considered dangerous.

Observation 6-5: In Germany, state discourses have radicalized the discourse led by some antagonists of the new religious movements.

Given the relative weakness of new religious movements in Germany and the fact that German polity (as to date) uses legal action mainly to contain *Scientology* but not other new religious movements, we can thus modify the proposition that "[t]he capacity of a single religious firm to monopolize a religious economy depends upon the degree to which the state uses force to regulate the religious economy." (Stark & Iannaccone 1994: 222) to

Conjecture 6-1: The capacity of an incumbent set of religious firms to monopolize or oligopolize a religious economy depends upon the degree to which the state regulates the religious economy through force or communicative action."

Hence, it has become apparent, t h a t the German and other polities influence or attempt to influence the discourse on the new religious movements and consequently New Age, which is viewed as part of these movements. Let me now briefly outline, h o w New Age identity is constructed by the German state.

New Age as Deviant Behavior

Basically, two accusations by the anti-cult movement are reiterated in official state discourses. New religious movements are considered to be frequently psychologically harmful, and it is alleged that some of the new religions produce unethically high profits. On top, it is emphasized that children might become victimized by cults, a symbolically charged allegation. Together these three components construct new religious movements including New Age as deviant, criminal behavior. As the *Enquête-Kommission* puts it,

"Purposefully criminal action and behavior can be observed and […] is facilitated through potential or latent criminality." (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 149, translation mine)

Medicalization of New Age

Anti-cult movement allegations of mind-control and brainwashing take a back seat in German state framings of new religious movements, as

"[t]he assumption of 'conversions to cults' through 'psycho techniques' such as 'mind control,' 'brainwashing,' and 'psycho-mutation' should be dropped in favor of more complex models."(*ibid.*)[250]

Still, the central underlying current of anti-cult movement rhetorics, namely that new religious movements as a whole are psychologically harmful, is retained, as

"nevertheless […] psycho-social dependency can develop. […] In this regard will power and self-determination of the individual are not eliminated entirely, but massively tainted." (*ibid.*)[251]

Again, New Age's mass organizations are considered particularly prone to psychological abuses, although also "at least part of the techniques offered on the [New Age] psycho-market […] constitute deep interventions into the human mind" (*ibid.*). Even if that would be true, it is at best debatable, if participation in new religious movements in general is to the detriment or the improvement of the participants psychological health. In fact, a meta-analysis of available studies on the mental health impact of new religious movements (including *est* in one instance) tends to support the thesis that participation in new religious movements might actually improve the participants mental health status (Rochford, Purvis & Eastman 1989).

Transcendental Meditation, then, is practice about which distinguished scholars rhetorically ask "what could be more harmless" (Stark & Bainbridge 1997: 105)? Yet, relying on some unspecified accounts on meditation in general and the testimony of a TM apostate, the *Enquête-Kommission* cautions that

"time and again, there are reports that some meditation techniques might entail the danger of psychological decompensation. Thus a defector from *Transcendental Meditation* reported […] threatening and to him on drug experiences reminding experiences." (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 88, fn. 177, translation mine)

Likewise, the Berlin Senator for Schools, Youth and Sport writes — referring to a ruling by the federal administrative court (*Bundesverwaltungsgericht*) and a report by the federal government — that *Transcendental Meditation* "might lead to psychological defects with

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[250] Of course, it seems fair to add that the very same allegations continue to enjoy state sponsored legitimacy through the reference to anti-cult movement publications as reliable information material.

[251] The position of the French *enquête parlementaire*, while also rejecting the brainwashing approach to conversion, even further incorporates anti-cult movement framings:

"In no way it could be established [that recruitment to cults is conducted] through a coercive process, contrary to some methods employed towards persons well integrated into the structures of the cult, which follow manifest 'mind control' techniques." (Guyaard 1996: 41, translation mine)

unstable personalities." (Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Schule, Jugend und Sport 1997: Section 7.3.4)

The same brochure situates *est/Forum* within a tradition with *Scientology*, whose authoriarian and even criminal character is widely assumed in German public discourse. It emphasizes that *est/Forum* founder Werner Erhard once took a seminar with *Scientology* and interprets the fact that *Scientology* offers a "repair course for *est*-casualties" that *est/Forum* techniques are partly adapted from *Scientology* (*ibid.*, section 7.4.2). Ironically agreeing with *Scientology*, the brochure continues:

> "There really were casualties; and a growing criticism in particular because of rigid methods [employed by *est/Forum*]." (*ibid.*)

The *Enquête-Kommission* itself does not discuss *est/Forum* separately, but instead refers persons interested in the organization to books and websites designed by anti-cult movement activists (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 235).

Like in anti-cult movement discourses and in congruence with the view of New Age organizations threatening the psychological health of its rank-and-file members, there exists a medicalization of the phenomenon. In an obvious allusion to the dangers associated with pharmaceuticals, the Berlin Senate titles its brochure on new religious movements "Sects: Risks and Side Effects" (Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Schule, Jugend und Sport 1997).[252] The same metaphor can also be found in the brochure on New Age by Schleswig-Holstein's "cult information bureau."[253]

The New Age Market

However, while the importation of the anti-cult movement frames into state discourses on New Age does exist, generally these frames are reserved for the more hierarchical organized groups, in particular *Scientology*, but also the *Unification Church*. Indeed, Germany does not even consider *est/Forum* and TM, the New Age organizations against which most deviance metaphors are leveled, part of New Age. Other states that have adopted a similarly restrictive stance towards new religious movements do not even relate the New Age mass organizations

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[252] In Germany, all prescription and most non-prescription drugs are required to state the existence of "risks and side effects" an their packages. Most Germanophones would recognize this allusion..

[253] <http://www.schleswig-holstein.de:80/landsh/landesreg/staatskanzlei/sekten_02.html>, 30 October, 1998.

to the anti-cult frame, but recur exclusively to the market metaphor when specifically discussing New Age.[254]

The framing of New Age as a market dominated by unconscientious hucksters delivering unprofessional services is by far the most common one. Indeed, this frame is so pervasive, even the generally more liberally oriented Green party supports the mainstream state framings in the case of New Age (Köster-Losßack & Seiwert 1998: 160).[255]

What might be called the *market frame* emphasizes two aspects of New Age. First, the contractual relationships that characterize the New Age market are almost always problematized. It is assumed that the market structure of New Age prohibits the development of effective treatment methods for those psychological problems, with which the average customer confronts New Age. Allegedly, the New Age market cannot be sustained without a continuos reproduction of its customer's problems, because effective treatment would erode the customer base.[256] Hence, New Age businesspersons have allegedly no interest in the development or administering of effective solutions to customer's problems, and the market consequently reproduces these problems (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 48). This negative assessment is upheld despite dissenting results of an empirical study conducted upon request of the *Enquête-Kommission*. Although this study employed a sampling method skewed towards finding New Age apostates (*ibid.*, p. 49), the vast majority of sampled New Age customers (83%) were satisfied with the treatment they received and subjectively rated the treatment at least as well as the one received through the "traditional" psychological professionals (*ibid.*, p. 50).[257] The *Enquête-Kommission* ignores these findings as well as Rochford, Purvis & Eastman's (1989) meta-analysis of studies on the mental health effects of new religions, which also suggests positive, if any effects. Instead, the Commission goes on to assert that

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[254] Both Belgian (Duquesne & Willems 1997) and French (Guyaard 1996) *enquêtes parlementaires* exclusively resort to the market frame with respect to TM, the French report mentions *est/Forum* only *en passant*, its Belgian counterpart does not do so at all.

[255] To be sure, even otherwise sober observers alleged once that "we can only assume that many undetected frauds lurk behind a variety of client cults" (Stark & Bainbridge 1979: 289).

[256] Of course, the same argument could be, but is not, made with respect to academic psycho-therapies.

[257] On a high school grade scale traditional, psychotherapists were given on average the equivalent of a B- (2.3), while New Age therapists received a straight A (1.1) by former clients of both types of therapists, with the expressed search for those who had made negative experiences with New Age treatments in the construction of the sample. I might add that it is incomprehensible to me, why the study did not at least rely on a Likert scale rather than framing their question with the help of the murky school grades.

> "the psycho-market offers techniques and therapies that can make a profound impact on the human psyche. As a result, these techniques and therapies or their unskilled applications may cause physical and mental harm to human beings." (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 149)

Hence, the state emphasizes New Age's u n p r o f e s s i o n a l i t y , which plagues the techniques offered within New Age. According to state rhetorics, this unprofessionality and the dangers associated with it result from the organization of the phenomenon as a market.

A second accusation that is levied against New Age is also closely tied to its market structure. It is alleged that the New Age market has become too complex to be transparent for the average customer (*ibid.*, pp. 47, 145); "the market is diffuse and [consequently] bizarre" (Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Schule, Jugend und Sport 1997: section 1.1). Given the unusual proliferation of the market, which I will discuss in the following chapter, this assessment certainly enjoys more empirical credibility. What New Age protagonists consider as eclecticism is here redefined as ambiguity, as an amorphous "conglomerate" (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 52) of practices. Moreover, the non-transparency of the market is considered to require specific legal redress (*ibid*., pp. 145f, 154), although non-transparency seems to be a problem of most, if not all markets. Here, two arguments are cited. Once again the alleged inherent dangerousness of the offered practices is cited. Supposedly, the customer cannot detect these dangers because of the complexity of the market. In addition, the market arrangement itself is seen as a source for concern. For instance, in 1997 the German Secretary for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth writes in a newspaper article:

> "The disappointment grows, […] when still more private savings are used up on inquisitorial tests and grotesque seminars."[258]

Potential financial dangers for customers appear in the limelight. At the same time, there is no concern for the question, if these dangers might be a feature of all similarly regulated markets. The *Enquête-Kommission* proceeds slightly more cautionary, warning that "the creation of transparency shall not destroy an entire market." (Deutscher Bundestag 1998: 149) Still, the emphasis lies on the intransparency of the New Age market. In an for the current (late 1990s) ideological climate unusual mistrust of Adam Smith's *invisible hand*, it also claims that an "financial orientation on the psycho market is impossible" (*ibid*.). Against

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[258] Nolte, Claudia: "Raffiniert, gefährlich: Warum Sekten attraktiv sind und was der Staat gegen sie tun kann," *Das Sonntagsblatt*, January 31, 1997.

or at least unsupported by the *Enquête-Kommission*'s own empirical research, a "growing number of customer complaints on financial deception" (*ibid.*.) is cited to justify the call for a specific regulation of the market, *inter alia* through an incorporation of "healing quackery" into the fraud definition of the penal code (*ibid.*, p. 151) and through an extension of the regulations on extortionate pricing (*ibid.*, p.152) specifically with regard to new religious movements.

In sum, the German state is engaged in the debate on New Age and its identity more or less on behalf of anti-cultists. Time and again, the movement and other new religions are depicted as deviant and dangerous. Empirical studies that present dissenting views are by and large ignored, while voices of the anti-cult movement become certified through state institutions. In the assault on new religions in general, New Age takes on a special role, insofar as in its case the profit motive is overemphasized and debunked. A comparison with other markets does not take place, so that at first glance the features of the New Age market (falsely) appear unique. The strong siding of the German and other West European states (Belgium, France, Austria) has led to a radicalization of the discourse by other New Age antagonists. While in the US debunking of New Age is left to the, admittedly numerous, fundamentalist Christians, in Germany even mainstream Protestant and Catholic churches warn of the dangers associated with cults like New Age. Does state support also influence media discourses on New Age? The following section will show that it does, but it does so to a surprisingly small extent.

Audiences: New Age Discourse in the Mass Media

Let me now explore, how the print media depict New Age. At least since Todd Gitlin's (1980) seminal study *The Whole World is Watching*, it has become clear, how important the interaction between media and movement is for the latter (e.g., Gamson 1988; Gamson & Wolfsfeld 1993: 116; McAdam 1996: 346; Park 1941: 1; Richardson, Kilbourne & Van Driel 1989: 36; Tuchman 1978: 134). This is probably even more true for New Age than it was for the civil rights movement, as large parts of the population and in particular the cultural and political elites come into contact with New Age o n l y through the media (Richardson, Kilbourne & Van Driel 1989: 36), while the Sixties' student activism and its successor movements were both institutionally and personally — not the least through family relations — intertwined with the elites.

But not only the elites form their view on New Age largely in interaction with the media, so does the bulk of the remaining populace (Gamson 1992b: 58). Viewed this way, media discourses can be considered as closely following bystander public discourses. This is the main reason, why I have chosen to focus on the analysis of the media discourse on New Age.

Of course, the use newspaper accounts as proxies for everyday discourses is not without problems. For starters, the newspaper readership in general and broadsheet readers in particular are not representative of the general population, but instead are skewed towards the political and cultural elites. This bias, though, is mitigated by the fact that TV framings, the central cultural resource for non-elite persons, do not differ markedly from newspapers framings (Gitlin 1980: 301). Next, newspaper discourses are not an isomorphic projection of their readers' discourses, either. Neither can printed discourses adequately reflect the dynamics of everyday conversations, nor do they shed light on the interaction between audiences and the media (Gamson 1994: 200). Hence, certainly a research design as presented in *Talking Politics* (Gamson 1992b) would have lead to more ecologically valid results. On the bright side, the influence of researchers on the production of the data is negligible. That cannot be said of small group discussions, which would capture the communication dynamics better. In addition, nearly all data for my study were immediately computer readable, a fact that enabled me to use quantitative analytical tools. What is more, sifting through newspaper archives is by far cheaper than recording small group discussions. Last but certainly not least, Gamson's (1992b) study itself has shown that many, if not most people, do work with frames that appear in the media, in particular if it comes to collective action frames. Media discourses seem to reasonably reflect the actual cleavages in a population. To survive financially, media need to attract large parts of the population. Media report what interests many, if not most people.

> "Cultural resonance, then, is news. […] Resonance is why there are sports pages and theater pages and 'society' pages in newspapers, but not nursery school pages or pages reporting events in the worlds of optometry or dentistry (eyes and teeth are, after all, very important.)" (Berger 1971: 8)

> "At the same time, there is normally little problem in demonstrating that, at least in broad terms, news 'coincides with' and 'reinforces' the 'definition of the political situation evolved by the political elite." (Schudson 1989: 11)

To operationalize audience discourses through media discourses thus has the virtue to focus on those frames that are relevant in the production of the most important framings, those of the recruitment pool and those of the most powerful persons that control collective action.

The analysis of media framings of New Age will start with an exploration of the context into which the media place New Age (section 0). Next, the major frames that are used in the reporting on New Age will be identified (section 0). Structure and content of the frames are largely a product of the sources to which journalists recur will argued in section 0. Differences in reporting across newspapers that are published in different polities will be discussed in section 0. The main argument in the present section will be that the "interplay" between frames existing prior to the movement's emergence, the movement's empirical reality and the sources journalists recur to in their reports on New Age produce a framing that is at once conducive to the reproduction of New Age as a mass proto-movement and averse to the evolution of viable collective action frames. How such framing looks and why it has developed will become clearer, when I tie together the threads I will develop in the ensuing three subsections in section 0. Let me now start by presenting my findings on the contextualization of New Age in the media.

New Age is Soft News

News stories on or with reference to the New Age movement are usually *soft news*,[259] i.e., their dissemination is relatively independent of the actual timing of the events reported in the news. The primary locations for soft news are the topical sections of the paper, that is, the editorial desks for the arts, culture, lifestyle, and magazine. Section editors for topical news are typically subordinate to the territorial, i.e. local, national and international editors, of the paper (Tuchman 1978: 30), which frequently precludes a placement of such news on

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[259] The news category typology I employ here is discussed at length in Tuchman (1974). Below table (adopted from) identifies the main categories of the typology:

Type	Schedule	Urgent Dissemination?	News Technology Affects Perception?	Future Predictions Facilitated?
Soft News	Nonscheduled	No	No	Yes
Hard News	Un- or Prescheduled	Yes		
Spot News	Unscheduled	Yes	No	No
Developing News	Unscheduled	Yes	Yes	No
Continuing News	Prescheduled	Yes	No	Yes

Table 6-F Categorization of News Types.

prominent places of the paper, notably on the front page. Figure 6-1 shows that roughly three quarters of the articles concerned with New Age squarely fall into the soft news category. Although most of the remaining articles do appear in the sections that deal mainly with hard news, that is, the national, local, editorial, sports and business sections of the paper, they are frequently either soft news in substance or *prescheduled hard news*, such as concert critiques or announcements of social gatherings. That explains, why most hard news stories that mention New Age can be found in the local section: They usually announce local New Age music events and meetings by New Age groups. Coverage of the New Age music industry in the business section accounts for another substantial slice of the hard news coverage. There are some references to New Age in the editorial section, but most opinion pieces that are immediately concerned with New Age are letters to the editor that refer to past (soft) news on New Age. The percentage of unscheduled, breaking or continuing hard news on the national or global level, finally, hovers at only around 2%.
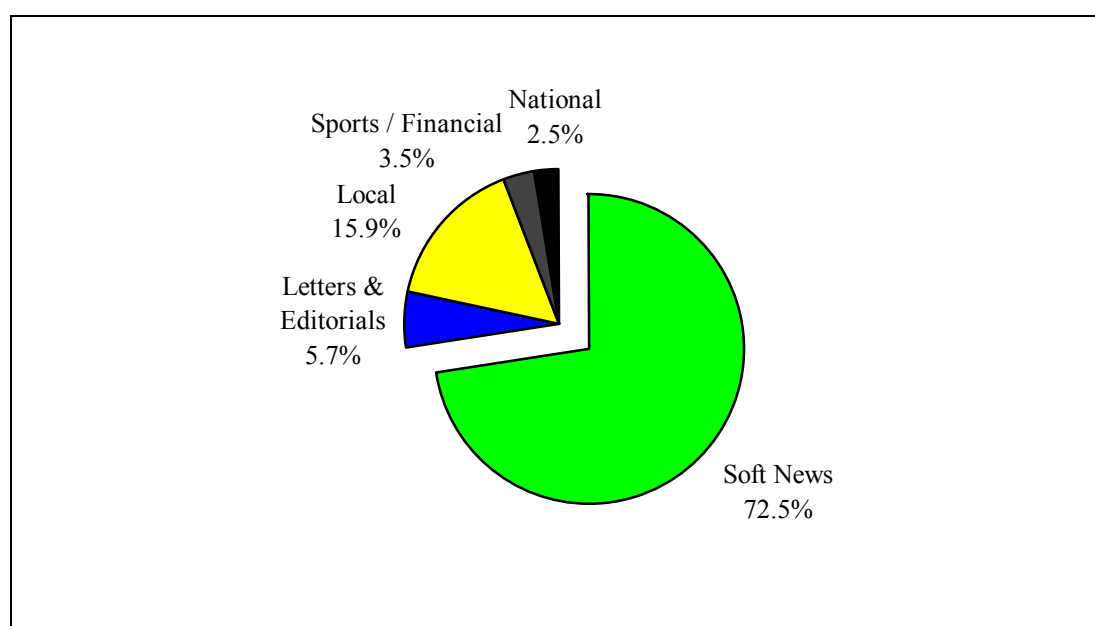
Figure 6-1 Location of Articles With New Age Reference in Major Papers

Detailed Break-up of Soft News Categories

A look at the more detailed break-up of the news categories as shown in Figure 6-2 gives some further hints, when New Age has a chance to make the news and which aspects of New Age are reported most on.
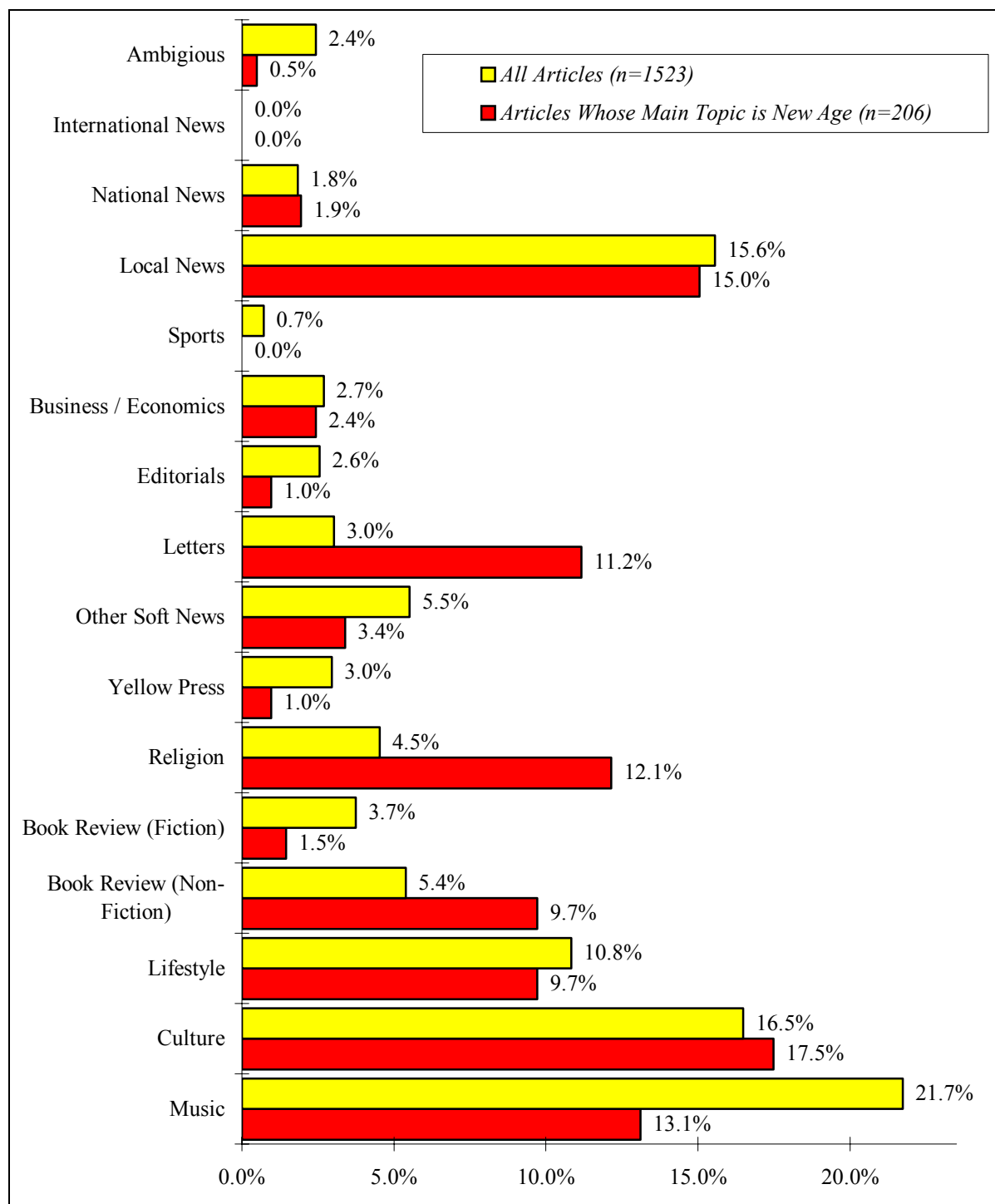
Figure 6-2 Distribution of New Age References Across News Categories (*n=1,523*)

Music and Book Sections

The commercially most important branches of New Age, the New Age music and book industries, are in the forefront of New Age reporting. Together they account for about one third of all articles that deal with New Age in some way and almost one fourth of the articles

that are primarily concerned with New Age. Articles on New Age music are relatively less frequent in articles whose primary focus is New Age, since features on New Age music are often embedded in cumulative reviews of jazz or world music records or it is sometimes unclear, if the music reviewed can be considered New Age.[260] Still, that roughly 25% of the reporting appears in the book and music categories, testifies to the importance of these currents for the external view of New Age. Of course, the ample reporting on New Age in these genres can at least partially be attributed to the well-established ties of the music and book industry to the journalists. Reports on new book and record releases are simply routine practice for the print media. Reporting on New Age books and music thus to some extent simply reflects the success of this genre in their respective industry.

Lifestyle Section

Lifestyle, culture and "human interest" or "yellow press" news account for another fourth to third of the news on New Age. In these categories reporting on the core social activities of New Age can be found. The lifestyle and culture desks present from time to time accounts on the activities of New Age groups or individuals, such as a story on a pagan coven or New Age healing practices. Regarding these articles, three observations can immediately be made. First, rather than being based on wire service reports, they are usually investigated by a reporter affiliated with the paper in question. Although some of this bias certainly can be explained by the inherent preference of editors for staff writers over wire services (Tuchman 1978: 24), it is safe to assume that most pieces did not appear in any form in any wire report,[261] as they are almost always focused on local events, and thus are not considered of national (or global) relevance. And indeed, most events and activities that are described do seem to bear little relevance on a nationwide audience, as those articles on New Age usually

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[260] If some music is appropriately labeled New Age is a difficult question, since many musicians lately try to avoid the label New Age, as it has been stigmatized as "elevator music." Likewise, some records released long before New Age has become an established music category have been appropriated by New Age. Some examples for this appropriation are Mike Oldfield's 1974 classic *Tubular Bells* and the incorporation of artists such as *Enya* or *Clannad* that previously had been categorized as folk pop. Even *Kraftwerk* has been labeled New Age in the media, which shows, how ambiguous New Age is also as a music category.

[261] This excludes obviously those articles published initially in the *New York Times*, who naturally were also distributed by the *Times* own wire service.

focus on local New Age groups that are examined in isolation from the movement as a whole.[262]

Yellow Press

As for the human interest stories, the first observation is that few New Age celebrities, who would warrant a portray of a New Age proponent in their own right, seem to exist. The only exceptions are Deepak Chopra and Andrew Weil, the publicly most visible representatives of holistic medicine, and the countercultural icons Carlos Castaneda and Timothy Leary, who despite their actual distance to the movement have been labeled New Age by the media. Other yellow press material is usually either prompted through some reports on deviant, possible harmful excesses of movement proponents, or when a person known outside the movement comes publicly into contact with the movement. An example for a widely publicized story that falls into the first category is the crash of the plane flown by seven year old Jessica Dubroff, whose mother reportedly is an adherent of New Age.[263] Hillary Clinton's consultation of New Age therapist Jean Houston is typical for a story of the second category.[264]

Religion Section

When it comes to overrepresentation of news categories, the religion and letters categories stand out. As New Age touches frequently on issues considered to be religious or is considered itself to be a religion, sect, cult or religious movement, it comes to no surprise that articles dedicated to the phenomenon are often found in the religion section.

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[262] An exception in this respect is the *Christian Science Monitor*, that — probably due to its origins as a paper by a Christian sect — from time to time reports on the implications of New Age as a whole.

[263] All American dailies and weeklies in my sample reported at length and oftentimes with follow-up stories on the crash, as did the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Under the supervision of her father, Jessica Dubroff in attempt to become the youngest pilot ever to have crossed the North American continent took off with her plane under adverse weather circumstances near Cheyenne, WY on April 11, 1996. The plane crashed, killing the two. The event was widely publicized even before the plane crash, the television network *ABC* even had installed a camera on board. However, only in the aftermath of the plane crash Jessica's mother New Age leanings were discussed in the media and utilized as an *ex post* rationale for the recklessness of the endeavor.

[264] Nancy Reagan's experencies with astrologers were probably more often been consired part of an involvement with traditional occult, although a few articles on Reagan's also contain references to New Age (see, e.g., Lafee, Scott: "Joan Quigley — Wizard of the White House: How Nancy's Astrologer Got Her Turn," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, October 25, 1989, p. C1.

Letters to the Editor

The highest overrepresentation of New Age news can be found in the letters-to-the-editor category, though. Letters to the editor account for only a tiny fraction of the average broadsheet, but more than 10% of all articles primarily concerned with on New Age are letters. The high frequency of the letter category in my sample hints that the interest of readers on New Age is probably greater than journalists assume it is.

Implications of Soft News Categorization

Most news on New Age are thus soft news and therefore are relegated to the back pages of the paper. On the one hand, this categorization entails some advantages. For instance, it does not deem a news story that cannot be released on the day it is written into obliteration. Likewise, the part of the newspaper where soft news are published typically carries more flexible space restrictions, which permits more detailed background reports. With respect to the mobilization of collective action proper, the soft news tag is very disadvantageous, though, as it conveys a lack of urgency and thereby deems events less important and serious.

The news locations reflect the view of New Age as an inessential and inconsequential phenomenon, an attitude seems to reflect a rather typical reaction of news writers towards i n c i p i e n t social movements (Tuchman 1974: 124). For instance activities by the women's movement initially were also confined to the "women" and later the "family" pages (Tuchman 1978: 136ff). New Age is no different in this respect.

As membership numbers rise, mass events take place and movement ideology becomes visible in the public discourse, reporting on successful movements over time become more frequently hard news (Gitlin 1980; Tuchman 1978). Admittedly, this development does not come without a price tag. In the beginning the movement frequently needs to resort to telegenic tactics, such as large or violent demonstrations, to attract hard news coverage. This attention to strategy regularly leads to a loss in ideological depth of the movement. The creation of movement celebrities, which frequently occurs after the movement has become widely known, aggravates this situation even further. Granting these drawbacks, though, most sustained movements become semi-legitimate contenders in the political process and an established actor in civil society. At least since the 1960s, "movements have become certified in the media" (Gitlin 1980: 284) and movement leaders have been added to reporters' beats, increasing the likelihood of the (co-)creation of hard news by movement "officials." Hardly

any new policy measure that affects the environment these days goes uncommented by *Greenpeace* or its associates in the media; without question the positions of the *Christian Coalition* or *NOW* in the "Monica-Lewinsky-affair" are of interest to the media. Likewise struggles within the movement become hard news: When there was conflict about the adoption of an anti-immigration stance within the *Sierra Club*, all major American broadsheets did cover the internal discussion in the movement organization in their national politics pages. In sum, over time f u l l - f l e d g e d social movements become more and more hard news.

In contrast, over a period of twenty years and despite the fact that the New Age following is at least as numerous as the following of some new social movements, reporting on the proto-movement New Age has largely remained soft news. Not even New Age celebrities Deepak Chopra or Andrew Weil, much less any of their less prominent colleagues, are consulted by the media when there are major medical developments that warrant front-page news in the field Weil and Chopra are working. In contrast, n o t to print the opinion of the *ACLU* or a fundamentalist Christian organization or spokesperson in an article on the school prayer controversy would be considered an affront against journalistic objectivity, while the standpoint of the equally affected (and — in comparison to the *ACLU* — most likely equally numerous) New Agers remains obscure. Likewise, intra-movement discourses are of no interest for the media. For instance, I could not find a single article that would discuss a conflict within the movement.

Paper	Date	Headline	Topic
New York Times	September 29, 1986	Spiritual Concepts Drawing a Different Breed of Adherent	Shift in religious attitudes of US-Americans
New York Times	November 16, 1986	Teachings of 'Ramtha' Pull Hundreds West	Exodus of adherents of the channeler J.Z. Knight to the Pacific Northwest
San Diego Union-Tribune	April 6, 1989	Old religion now outdated in New Age?	Success of the New Age movement
Los Angeles Times[265]	July 19, 1991	Popular Guy	Local lecture by Ram Dass
Los Angeles Times	July 6, 1992	Cars? No, Japan buys Our Gurus	Influence of American New Age teachers on Japanese Culture
New York Times	September 25, 1992	Worldly and Spiritual Clash in New Age Divorce	Morally questionable actions by Elisabeth Clare Prophet, head of the *Church Universal and Triumphant*, a New Age group according to the *Times*
New York Times	December 27, 1993	Spiritual Seekers Borrow Indians' Ways	Appropriation of American Indian traditions by New Age
Christian Science Monitor	August 19, 1996	Influence of New Age, Megachurches Grows Among US Worshippers	Development of religious attitudes in the US
Christian Science Monitor	December 31, 1996	America Taps Religious Roots In Year of Spiritual Questing	Development of religious attitudes in the US
Christian Science Monitor	March 28, 1997	Rise in Cults As Millennium Approaches	Survey of millenarian movements (prompted by *Heaven's Gate* Suicide)
Los Angeles Times	March 28, 1997	39 in Cult Left Recipes of Death	*Heaven's Gate* suicide
New York Times	March 28, 1997	Death in A Cult: The Personality	*Heaven's Gate* suicide
New York Times	March 28, 1997	Odyssey to Suicide	*Heaven's Gate* suicide
San Diego Union-Tribune	March 28, 1997	Origins of the Cult: Bo and Peep' Began Dooms-day Odyssey in '70s	*Heaven's Gate* suicide

(to be continued)

Table 6-2 Front Page Stories on New Age in Four Select Newspapers 1975-1997

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[265] Orange County Edition.

Paper	Date	Headline	Topic
			(continued)
New York Times	March 29, 1997	Death in a Cult: The Former Members	*Heaven's Gate* suicide
New York Times	March 30, 1997	Death in a Cult: The Landscape	*Heaven's Gate* suicide
San Diego Union-Tribune	March 30, 1997	18-year-old Recounts His Internet Visit with cultist	*Heaven's Gate* suicide
Christian Science Monitor	March 31, 1997	Mainstream Culture Embraces - but Redefines Meaning of 'Spirituality'	Attitudes of Americans towards spirituality (prompted by the *Heaven's Gate* suicide)
Los Angeles Times	April 4, 1997	Free Will? Or Thought Control?	*Heaven's Gate* suicide
Los Angeles Times	May 7, 1997	*Heaven's Gate* Pair Attempt Suicide; 1 Dies	Follow-up suicide on *Heaven's Gate* suicide

Table 6-2 Front Page Stories on New Age in Four Select Newspapers 1975-1997[266]

When does New Age become Hard News?

Although New Age has mainly remained soft news, there are a few extraordinary cases, in which New Age groups or persons do make hard news. However, these cases are not suited to result in a growing acceptance of New Age as a legitimate contender for social change. On the contrary, hard news on New Age have cemented the illegitimacy of New Age in both polity and civil society. Consider the most widely read hard news, i.e. the front-page news, in four major US papers, namely *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *San Diego Union-Tribune*. Table 6-2 presents all front page stories primarily concerned with New Age that have been released in either of the four papers between 1980 and 1997. The first observation is that only in 1986, nearly a decade after the first appearance of New Age in the press, for the first time a nationwide US broadsheet dedicates a front page story to a New Age phenomenon. It is the starting column of a human interest story on New Age values and organizations in the *New York Times*.[267] Like some of the other front-page

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[266] Includes *New York Times* since 1975, *Christian Science Monitor* since 1980, *Los Angeles Times* since 1983, *San Diego Union-Tribune* since 1985 (Sources: *Lexis/Nexis* database; *Christian Science Monitor* Archives, <http://www.csmonitor.com/archive/archive.html>, April 8, 1998).

[267] Lindsey, Robert: "Spiritual Concepts Drawing a Different Breed of Adherent," *The New York Times*, September 29, 1986, p.A1.

stories, this article constitutes soft news despite its location in the paper. In particular the front-page articles in the *Christian Science Monitor* that is traditionally more interested in background information (Merrill & Fisher 1980: 96), read: soft news, fall into that category. With the sole exception of the announcement of a presentation by New Age and counterculture celebrity Ram Dass on the front-page of the Orange County edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, all front-page h a r d n e w s articles deal with the alleged harmful misconduct of New Age leaders, "gurus" in newspaper jargon, who lead his or her following into serious hardship. In fact, more than half of all front-page articles on New Age were published because of the collective suicide of the *Heaven's Gate* group in 1997, notwithstanding the fact that from an internal movement perspective it is highly questionable, if *Heaven's Gate* can reasonably be considered part of New Age.[268] Thus, the few front-page hard news New Age garners serve to discredit rather than certify the movement for civil society.

This situation is in no way peculiar to the *Heaven's Gate* case. Take a brief look at the second front page article in *The Times* on New Age. The story — written by Robert Lindsey, who also authored the first front page piece — is about the resettling of some adherents of the channeler J.Z. Knight around her residence in coastal Washington state and to the Pacific Northwest in general.[269] Although no direct insinuation of brainwashing is made, many elements of the article point to alleged psychological wrongdoings. The article starts with an account of a petty entrepreneur abandoning his business seemingly without much preparation and moving to Northern California. An estranged husband of a believer in Ramtha — the entity Knight is channeling — is quoted describing Knight as "obviously a fake, but she sure is a spellbinder." Large parts of the story are concerned with Knight's (presumably too) high income, even though the journalistic notion of objectivity is served, as Knight is also quoted. However, only after Lindsey has excessively presented the position of Knight's critics, Knight herself may d e f e n d her actions:

> "[Mrs. Knight] a c k n o w l e d g e d that she was taking in millions of dollars a
> year from the fees collected at her personal appearances and from the sale of
> videotapes and other materials. But she quickly added, 'We pay 50 percent of it, right

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[268] While the *Heaven's Gate* phenomenon was widely discussed in a variety of magazines, both issues of the *New Age Journal* published immediately before and after the mass suicide do not contain a single reference to the group.

[269] Lindsey, Robert: "Teachings of 'Ramtha' Pull Hundreds West," *The New York Times*, November 16, 1986.

off the top, in taxes.' […] 'I'm not a guru; there are no such things as 'Ramtha-ites;'
I'm not somebody's savior. This is a business.'"(emphasis mine)

The fee Knight charges for her services is thus implicitly branded as secretive and probably immoral.[270] The article is rather typical for hard news reporting on New Age. It contains all elements central in the *cult frame* analyzed below. Just like in discourses of the anti-cult movement, the "cult" leader is depicted as a charismatic person ("spellbinder"), who misuses her talents to deceive passive followers. The latter suffer severely from the involvement with the cult. The earnestness of the belief system the cult advocates is discounted for the fact that the organizational form of the group is a private business, the profit motive is emphasized. Indeed, if the perpetrator/victim theme of the cult frame is missing in news stories on New Age, chances are that hard news status cannot be achieved.

News on Collective Action by New Age: The Case of Harmonic Convergence

One can conclude that the categorization of New Age as soft news unless there is some possibility to apply the derogatory cult frame is part of the inability of the movement and its leaders to stage media centered events. After all, it is widely known that the media focus on (preferably large) events rather than ideas (McCarthy, McPhail & Smith 1996; Mueller 1997: 822, 824; Oliver & Myers 1999: 46; Tuchman 1978: 134) and the c o l l e c t i v e action (proper) repertoire of New Age is admittedly limited. Such an explanation certainly takes us a long way and explains, why much of the hard news on New Age are concerned mainly with supposedly aberrant personalities. What, though, happens in the unusual case that New Age does engage in collective action proper, as it was the case during the so-called *Harmonic Convergence* celebration?

On August 16, 1987, between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m., tens, possibly hundreds of thousands[271] New Agers celebrated the *Harmonic Convergence* festival. In numerous places throughout industrialized countries, between several hundred and five thousand (at Mount Shasta in

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[270] Certainly, few journalists would prod a Christian priest or a psycho-analyst to "acknowledge" that they are paid for their services.

[271] As there was centralized organization committee and as the meeting places for harmonic convergence were widely dispersed, no cumulative numbers could be found. On the basis that in New York 2,000 people gathered and taken into account that new religious movement activity in New York is average (Bainbridge & Stark 1980a: 204f), a very rough estimate for the total number of participants is 40,000.

California)[272] New Agers gathered to sing and meditate together. Their professed goal was to contribute to the avoidance of pending catastrophes.

Except for *Time*, all US-American papers in my survey did produce an article on the gathering.[273] Only in the *New York Times* it made front-page news, though. The *San Diego Union-Tribune* and *Newsweek* considered it a human-interest story and reported on it in their respective lifestyle sections. The *Los Angeles Times* relegated *Harmonic Convergence* to page 2 and assigned it — as did the *New York Times* — to the local desk, even though the gatherings were held internationally. Why did such an extraordinarily large event elicit only subsidiary news reports? For one, the organization of the event certainly was not very favorable to either news collecting or news reporting routines. Starting in the early morning hours on Sunday in remote places, *Harmonic Convergence* certainly drew fewer reporters than it would have, if it had been held in a busy downtown district around midday (Tuchman 1978: 42). The geographical dispersion also impeded large scale-reporting, as mass media focus on photogenic events (Gitlin 1980: 121; see also Oliver & Myers 1999: 62-64, 73f, 75f). Moreover, no large scale national organization of New Age exists, which also promotes underreporting (Oliver & Myers 1999: 72, 75), as no unequivocally legitimate source can be discerned (Fishman 1980: 32ff). Yet, even given these obstacles, the unanimity with which the reporting on *Harmonic Convergence* deemed the event as inconsequential is conspicuous.

An additional; important reason for the New Age's difficulty to become hard news is the basic ignorance of news reporters with respect to New Age. This ignorance has two interrelated reasons. To begin with, New Age does not lie on any news beat. Although some reporters for religion do cover New Age, and even though New Age music events are usually covered through the same channels as are all other local music events, spokespersons and organization for the New Age are by and large missing in journalists' networks of informants. In this respect, the fact that New Age does not know any unanimous organizational leaders that could serve as steady informants is important. What is crucial, though, is that there exists a wide social distance between news reporters and the New Age protagonists. Journalists are firmly rooted in the new middle class, as are most of their informants (Gitlin 1980: 259f).

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[272] Weisman, Jonathan: "New Age Believers Greet a New Day: For Many, Harmonic Convergence Becomes Personal Celebration," *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1987, p. 5/1.

The bulk of the New Age members and many lower level leaders do not fit into this milieu: they are small businesspersons, not highly educated professionals. Thus, many journalists never come into unmediated contact with New Age adherents, unless they are specifically assigned to report on a New Age story. Usually they are assigned to such a story, if there is the suspicion that some (possibly criminal) wrongdoing has occurred within the New Age community. One reason, why criminal and conflictual events are overrepresented in the media (McQuail 1983: 22; Oliver & Myers 1999: 66f, 75) is that the initial trigger for the story frequently is collected on the police beat . Another reason is that criminal deviance is part of the cult frame, which I will describe below.

A, if not the prime example for a New Age hard news story that has evolved under these circumstances is the collective suicide of the *Heaven's Gate* group in April 1997. The story was initially obtained through the police and unfolded as a typical cult story, which reinforced the image of New Age rank-and-file members as volatile and misled personalities. Little did it matter, that *Heaven's Gate* had been perceived as a New Age group by neither *Heaven's Gate*, nor New Age members, nor in external framings of the movement prior to the suicide. Nor were some empirical incongruities with the cult frame reason enough to reframe the image *Heaven's Gate* as a New Age cult.

Conclusions

Let me summarize the location of New Age in the paper:

> *Observation 6-6*: Over an extended time period New Age has remained soft news, while reports on successful social movements after an initial period of presence in the soft news sections increasingly become hard news.

One important consequence of being confined with the boundaries of soft news for a proto-movement like New Age is that it becomes trivialized as a collective phenomenon. In turn, its activities are viewed as inconsequential. This representation of inefficacy obviously does not lend itself for collective action that presupposes a "cognitive liberation" (McAdam 1986) that generates a feeling of efficacy among prospective participants in collective action. This cognitive liberation would be particularly important for New Age, whose members like members of most millenarian movements "share a fundamental vagueness about the actual

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[273] *Time* later in the year released a cover story on New Age, discussing the *Harmonic Convergence* event (Friedrich, Otto with Mary Cronin, Michael Riley and Dennis Wyss: "New Age Harmonies: A Strange Mix of Spirituality and Superstition is Sweeping Across the Country," *Time*, U.S. Edition, December 7, 1987, p. 62ff).

way in which the new society will be brought about." (Hobsbawm [1959] 1971: 58). What is worse in case of New Age, is the following observation:

> *Observation 6-7:* In the exceptional cases, in which New Age becomes hard news, it is presented as a deviant phenomenon.

Thus, not only is New Age considered ineffectual, it also is stigmatized as psychologically deviant.

The categorization as (psychologically or medically) deviant is another powerful impediment for collective action, as the history of the gay liberation movement, which had grapple with and ultimately adopt the conceptual terrain of the medical profession (Weeks 1985), shows.[274]

Together with the fact that the police, which focuses on deviant behavior is a prime informant of the press on social phenomena outside the established political and social institutions, we arrive at:

> *Conjecture 6-2*: For the conversion of a proto-movement into a movement it is important for the latter to gain a s q u i c k l y a s p o s s i b l e entrance into the hard news sections of a paper.

New Age obviously did not succeed in this endeavor, if indeed it was ever on the agenda of persons central in the development of New Age. Consequently, the two frames that dominate in the reporting on New Age emphasize its inefficacy and its deviance, respectively. Let me now present these frames.

New Age Frames

In this section three frames, that are central to journalists understanding of New Age will be presented. The first of these frames is the *cult frame* that defines New Age as deviant phenomenon. Next, the frame I have termed the *New Age proper frame* and whose most distinctive characteristic is its insistence on New Age's inefficacy, will be introduced. Finally, the least frequently invoked frame, the *yin-and-yang frame*, pictures New Age as an eclectic, alternative movement. Let me start the presentation of these three frames with the cult frame.

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[274] After a movement has been successfully integrated into civil society, though, the deviance label can be utilized to strengthen the collective identity of a movement, as the case of the queer movement shows (Bernstein 1997).

The Cult Frame

The *cult frame* mirrors with a few modification the view of New Age by the anti-cult movement and fundamentalist Christians.

Elements of the Frame

Elements of the cult frame are:

> (1) charismatic and hypocritical leaders, who
>
> (2) use powerful brainwashing techniques and sometimes criminal means to
>
> (3) convert vulnerable, naïve, unsuspecting, and/or seeking persons to
>
> (4) an unreasonable and harmful belief system and
>
> (5) the authoritarian organization associated with it
>
> (6) in order to gain control of his/her follower's assets and/or labor, thereby
>
> (7) transforming the following into dependent social deviants
>
> (8) harming them and their relatives prior friends, whom the followers abandon.[275]

Put with the words of Herbert L. Rosendale, an official of the anti-cult organization *American Family Foundation*,

> "a cult is a group that is dominated by a charismatic leader that uses deception in its recruitment process, and it tends to exert total control over your life."[276]

This direct quote of Rosendale is taken from a *New York Times* article on New Age business seminars, which Rosendale regards as cultic practices. It shows that at times newspaper reporters rely on anti-cult movement officials in their framing on New Age, although this reliance is, as will be shown, far from complete.

In the cult frame, a movement leaders or the personified cult is considered the principal actor. His or her following, that is, the rank-and-file members, are considered passive victims that have fallen under charismatic control.

> "'It's very sad what's going on. Most of the people who get involved in these New Age groups, which are growing all over the place, are intelligent, altruistic, idealistic. They want to know the meaning of life, and someone comes along and tells them they have the answer. Then they're told they're the master of their own destiny, sort

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[275] This conceptualization basically reiterates Van Driel and Richardson's (1988b: 177) findings on media definitions of a cult with the amendment of the vulnerability of the cult recruits.

[276] Greene, Donna: "Cults and What to Do About Them," *New York Times*, December 31, 1995, p.13WC/3.

of an Eastern version of Norman Vincent Peale, but they don't know they are being subjected to mind control.'"[277]

Not only are cult leaders psychologically skillful, they are more often than not also hypocrites, as they do themselves not believe in their preachings. Instead, they have consciously molded a belief system with the help of which they can unduly profit from their following:

> "The New Age movement seduces people to spend money. [… *CUT* leader] Ms. Knight has built a considerable industry from the guttural voice that emerges from within her. […] Shirley MacLaine 'want[s] to prove that spirituality is profitable'"[278]

While the leaders are considered deceitful, their following is regarded as innocent, easily deceived victims. Adolescents, in patriarchal interpretations also women, are thus considered most susceptible.

> "By and large, people become involved with the New Age movement in the course of looking for means of overcoming their physical or emotional troubles."[279]

> "I believe women are more susceptible [to cults] because in our current society women are in a more conflicted position […] Women are more vulnerable because they more easily accept dependence, because they don't have the other independence base.'"[280]

The cult frame is one of the major established news frames (Gitlin 1980: 100) and has dominated the reporting on new religious movements since the 1978 *Jonestown* incident (Richardson 1983: 104).[281] Although most of the groups that belong to New Age empirically do not fit any, let alone all of the frame elements, disproportionally many prominent stories on New Age contain most or all elements of the cult frame. About one sixth of all stories, in which New Age is the main topic, and almost two thirds of all front-page stories on New Age e x p l i c i t l y frame the movement as a cult, while those that only discuss New Age as one among many issues only one in twenty does, which translates into a highly significant (*p<.001*), but moderate correlation of $\tau_b \approx .18$. In reality, this relationship will most likely be

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[277] Lindsey, Robert: "Spiritual Concepts …," *op. cit.*, *supra nota* 267.

[278] Egan, Timothy: "Worldly and Spiritual Clash in New Age Divorce," *New York Times*, September 25, 1992, p. A1.

[279] Di Veroli, Robert: "New Age Adherents Labeled as products of the Counterculture," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, August 4, 1990, p. B4. Di Veroli quotes a Jesuit Priest.

[280] Greene, Donna: "Cults and What to Do About Them," *op. cit*, *supra nota* 276.

[281] In a mixture of collective suicide and mass murder several hundred inhabitants of the *Jonestown* community died in 1978.

much stronger, as the cult frame implicitly underlies many hard news stories even if its elements are not expressly mentioned. The true association value is probably closer to the upper-bound estimate of the correlation at $\gamma \approx .66$.[282]

Usage of the Frame in the Media

Most New Age groups command over neither a structure nor a personnel that would be able to establish such dominance relationships. It is thus not surprising that frequently groups that clearly do not belong to New Age from an internal movement perspective are labeled New Age when the cult frame is employed. One example for an empirically unfounded or at least highly questionable external attribution of a group to New Age is the *Heaven's Gate* case. Other examples include Bhagwan followers depicted as New Agers "completely under the domination of their guru"[283] and *Church Universal and Triumphant* members being under the "'intense allegiance to one person,'"[284] namely church leader Elisabeth Clare Prophet. Alone the most publicized and controversial organization of this type, the *Church of Scientology*, is — against all empirical evidence[285] — explicitly associated in 21 or roughly one in hundred of all articles in my sample with the New Age movement.

At times, though, even "genuine" New Age organizations, most frequently *est/Forum*, but not infrequently also the New Age movement as a whole are framed as cults. In these cases, the authors usually explicitly identify the anti-cult movement as source of their allegations. Here are two examples that instrumentalize a diffuse notion of New Age and *est/Forum* as carriers of mind control techniques, respectively:

> "Aspects of ancient, occult beliefs and Eastern religious mysticism enter into the burgeoning 'new age' fads, which see mankind moving toward salvation or destruction. Some believers expect us to have an opportunity to make a new beginning this Aug. 16 and 17 [the day of *Harmonic Convergence*] when they think certain extraterrestrial will be waiting for us to contact them telepathically. Such silliness is not always harmless. Many people are taken in by frauds who charge high fees for self-improvement or consciousness-liberating courses that involve an

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[282] Not only the conservative coding practices justify this assumption: While Kendall and Goodman's γ does oftentimes overestimates associations (Agresti 1990: 22; Reynolds 1977: 74), the high number of tied pairs of observation in my sample suggests that Kendall's τ_b by design underestimates the relationship.

[283] Stix, Harriet: "Four Middle Class Groups: A Study of Life in America," *Los Angeles Times*, November 24, 1986, section 5, p. 1.

[284] Lakayo, Richard: "Heading for the Hills: A New Age Guru Goes Underground," *Time*, March 20, 1990, p. 20.

[285] As, I have mentioned in the previous chapter, none of the New Age stores and organizations I surveyed kept any of L. Ron Hubbard's writings, nor did any New Ager ever recommend or even mention *Scientology*.

'altered' mental state induced by hypnosis, meditation, or other means. What's worse, they leave themselves open to mental domination, as Reginald Alev, executive director of the *Cult Awareness Network* [a former major, US-American national anti-cult movement organization], has pointed out. As quoted in the *New York Times* last November, he noted that these people are 'told they're the master of their own destiny … but they don't know they are being subjected to mind control.'"[286]

"[C]ritics of these [New Age] groups argue that many are nothing more than cults and that others subject unwitting participants to mind control. The ideas themselves, like many of the groups, are not new. The *EST* psychological training program, popular and controversial in the 1970's, set the pattern for most of those that followed."[287]

In these cases journalistic objectivity is certainly only served through the "strategic use of quotation marks" (Tuchman 1972: 668), while the journalists have appropriated significant parts of the anti-cult movement rhetorics.

However, most articles do not simply replicate the anti-cult movement's cult frame in its entirety. While the heinousness of the cult leaders and the innocence of their victims are in line with the allegations of the anti-cult movement, the powerfulness of the brainwashing techniques plays a lesser role in most media version of the cult frame. To be sure, sometimes anti-cult rhetorics are imported without any modification, particularly, if a journalist has relied solely on anti-cultists as a source. That happens particularly, when journalists fail to recognize anti-cultists as such. For instance, quoting University of Denver religious scientist and anti-cult activist Carl Raschke, *Newsweek* claims that Ramtha channel J.Z. Knight practices "a form of m a s s h y p n o s i s that is leading to a m a s s acceptance of the irrational."[288]. Usually, however, the media explain the conversion process primarily with the mental weakness of the recruits and less with the effectiveness of the brainwashing techniques. The selective adoption of anti-cult movement discourses can be illustrated with a quote from the following article that decidedly breaks with the "brainwashing" thesis:

"The sociologist [Gerald Eberlein], one of the few German members of the international *Society for Scientific Exploration*. In lectures, books and TV

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[286] Cowen, Robert C.: "Debunking, Again, the Belief in ESP and the Occult." *Christian Science Monitor* .July 7, 1987, p. 21.

[287] Lindsey, Robert, "Spiritual Awareness …," *op. cit., supra nota* 267.

[288] Hacket, George with Pamela Abrahamson: "Ramtha: A Voice from Behind," *Newsweek*, December 15, 1986, p.42, emphasis mine. The statement mirrors vulgar versions of mass society devised for the explanation of fascist movements, thereby grossly overestimating the efficacy of the New Age movement.

appearances he appeals for a discussion with New Agers [*Esoterikern*] devoid of prejudices. 'What drives humans to surrender to a godlike guru,' Eberlein suggests, 'has been researched meticulously, in particular by American social psychologists. Research on the so-called *conversion processes* has demonstrated that no brainwashing is required. Instead all totalitarian groups which operate secluded from the environment become more and more irreal over time, which at times results in completely bizarre paranoiae.'"[289]

Apart from such keyings of the anti-cult movement frames, there are also (mainly soft) news stories that present both the cult frame and its countertheme. The countertheme views new religious movements as emerging religions, who face undue infringement of their right of religious freedom through state or anti-cult movement intervention. Accusations of mind control are rebuffed with the assertion that they lack empirical validity. The deviance theme of the cult frame is replaced by a theme of legitimate, even desirable difference.

"The 'manipulative techniques' in question are what cult critics call mind control or brainwashing. To critics of the critics, on the other hand, brainwashing amounts to hooey."[290]

Even the *Heaven's Gate* incident that lent itself ideally to a tacit adoption of the cult frame evoked some questioning of the capability of cult leaders to coerce the rank-and-file members.

"[D]espite claims that the 38 followers who committed suicide last week were not brainwashed or bullied by their wild-eyed leader, there is evidence to the contrary. Far from being freely thought-out final acts, the suicides are seen by some mental health experts and cult scholars as largely the result of a sustained, calculated and ruthless program of psychological coercion. 'I see them as victims of a hoax,' said Dr. Louis J. West, a UCLA psychiatrist and cult watcher. 'There was villainy here.' West and others believe that members of 'totalist' religious cults are subjected to a form of psychological manipulation known as undue influence, coercive persuasion or thought reform.

[…]

'I'm very dubious of the psychological interpretation' of the Heaven's Gate suicides, said Richard Hecht, chairman of religious studies at UC Santa Barbara. A person is attracted to a cult because it espouses a 'convincing narrative' in which the follower 'finds meaning,' he says. By implication, a follower is not passively

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[289] "Ein Astronom im esoterischen Kosmos: Das Phänomen der Sekten: 'Parawissenschaft ist ein Religionsersatz' Professor Gerald Eberlein erforscht an der TU die Gründe des boomenden Okkultismus," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, January 16, 1998.

[290] Sipchen, Bob: "Ten Years After Jonestown: The Battle Intensifies over The Influence of 'Alternative' Religions," *Los Angeles Times* November 17, 1995, p. 5/1.

brainwashed but actively 'buys into' the message. […] 'A cult,' he says, 'is essentially a religion that you don't like or understand."[291]

Narrative Fidelity

Thus, both cult frame and its countertheme exist in the media discourse. Yet, we need not make any bones about, which of the two frames enjoys a higher narrative vitality. For one, the actors that represent the cult frame enjoy usually a higher credibility as those associated with the countertheme vying for freedom of religious choice. One voice of the cult frame in the media is the anti-cult movement. Its organizations are largely presented as legitimate voluntary associations with no apparent stake in the rise or fall of new religious movements. This way, anti-cult movement activist Cynthia Kisser becomes "executive director of the *Cult Awareness Network*, a Chicago-based organization that provides i n f o r m a t i o n on cult activities"[292] Hence, anti-cult movement sources at times appear to be neutral "expert" bystanders. In contrast, the presentation of the counterframe through new religious movement officials, however plausible it may or may not be, is discounted by the fact that the spokesperson in question obviously has an interest in discrediting the cult frame. Of course, sometimes the "cult controversy" is also couched as an academic dispute, which might aid the countertheme, as many scholars have criticized mind control theses popular in anti-cult discourse. Yet, it turns out that scholars such as David Bromley, Anson Shupe, or even Rodney Stark, whose works could be construed to support the countertheme or at least contribute towards a differential application on of the cult frame across dissimilar new religious movements, were referred to as experts in only a single case in my original more than 4,000 case comprising sample (<.25‰!). In contrast, Carl Raschke, who supports many of the allegations made by the anti-cult movement is quoted fourteen times as an expert in the same sample. It is hard to believe that Raschke, whose monograph on contemporary Satanism (Raschke 1990) "cannot be taken seriously as a scholarly work, nor be accepted into legitimate academic discourse," (Epstein 1991: 439) and whose three references in the *Sociological Abstracts* database compare with more than three hundred by the three authors mentioned above, was selected because of his innate importance for scientific discourse.

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[291] Monmanay, Terence: "Free Will, or Thought Control? Were The Deaths Of Heaven's Gate Members The Result Of Brainwashing? The Debate Reflects Larger Cultural Questions about the Role of Choice and the Issue of Victimization," *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 1997, p. A1.

[292] Bordewich, Fergus M.: "Colorado's Thriving Cults," *New York Times*, May 1, 1988, p. 6/37, emphasis mine.

Instead, it seems his media presence can be explained with the fact that his theses resonate well with journalists' predispositions to accept the cult frame.

But the pervasiveness of the cult frame is not only a supply-side phenomenon. In particular the element of victim vulnerability, which is not contained in the cult frame as it is constructed by the anti-cult movement, seems to be one of the most conducive elements of the cult frame throughout a wide public. The *Heaven's Gate* suicide story powerfully illustrates its narrative vitality. The initial police report on the mass suicide claimed that most victims were probably in their late teens or early twenties, as the police deputy that first appear at the scene of the crime estimated the age of the first victim he had discovered in this age range. He recalls the situation as follows:

> "We'd only seen two faces on the bodies of these people. […] It was difficult for us to tell age, sex. […] it just … ah … appeared to us that it was all males, 18 to 24 at the two individuals we had to seen, that was the age group that we guessed at." (transcribed from Strauss 1997: 7′40′′)

N o n e of the victims was actually in that age range and the probability that the police officer indeed did first discover the only two males that were in their twenties is a minuscule seven in ten thousand. It is thus highly likely, that the deputy *ex post* rationalized his immediate unconscious adoption of the assumption that the victims were largely misdirected youth. Unsurprisingly, this assumption then also could be found in the newspapers immediately printed after the incident and before the police released the true age data, which showed that most of the victims were in their forties and fifties. But even several weeks after the suicide had been widely discussed in the media and their age was well known, San Diego mayor Susan Golding suggested with respect to the *Heaven's Gate* case that "[o]ne of the things that we should do and that we did when we were afraid during 70s of a lot of the cults is afraid of that they w e r e t a k i n g y o u n g c h i l d r e n , was to educate and to get the truth out." (transcribed from Strauss 1997: 26′20′′, emphasis mine).

Consequences for Collective Action Frames

While this modulation of the cult frame constructed by the anti-cult movement might lead to cognitive dissonance (Festinger [1957] 1962) in the perception of apostates and disgruntled former confidants, the most important effect on the bystander public remains the same. New religious groups are considered to encompass strong dominance relationships within strongly hierarchical, authoritarian, even "totalitarian" group structures.

Even without the brainwashing conjecture, the groups in question are thus depicted as being at odds with what Somers (1995) calls the "Anglo-American citizenship narrative"[293] that is based on the masterframe of liberal individualism. This narrative *inter alia* portrays the actors in civil society and the political process as bearing inalienable personal freedom rights, most notably the right to f r e e l y associate amongst each other. The major actors for social change in civil society, social movements, then are indeed v o l u n t a r y associations. Groups that violate or appear to violate this voluntarism and personal freedom rights then face a twofold problem. First, they would not be considered legitimate contenders within civil society, which would hamper their efficacy. Lack of legitimacy and efficacy, will on the other hand hamper the mobilization of those individuals, who are experienced in creating both legitimacy and efficacy, namely the new middle classes.

In conclusion, the influence of the cult frame, even if adopted only partially, is extremely detrimental for the collective action of the groups in question. It might seem trivial to spell out that the cult frame is inhibiting mobilizations. The point here, though, is that the frame is adopted s e l e c t i v e l y across different population groups and hence selectively obstructs mobilization efforts. It seems reasonable to assume that only those persons will adopt the cult frame, whose confidence in the frame will not be shattered. Given the extremely low empirical credibility of the frame with respect to New Age, those persons, who will not come into contact with the proto-movement and thus will rely primarily on media framings in their constructions of New Age. Again, members of the new middle class will be overrepresented in this group. Not only will they are overrepresented in the audience of the print media analyzed here,[294] but they are also less likely to come into contact with movement members, who are usually not to be found in their immediate network environment. What is more, those new middle class individuals, who are interested in a movement career, have ample opportunities to join new social movements or ethno-nationalist movements, which usually are firmly rooted in the institutional context of the new middle class. On the contrary, unattached "seekers" for some group experience that come into

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[293] Somers (1993, 1994, 1995) does question the empirical validity of this metanarrative. If the citizenship metanarrative does fit empirical reality or not is of no relevance for the argument developed here, though.

[294] However, as McManus (1994) has shown, television news largely relies on the print media in their initial selection of news. It is thus likely that TV and newspaper news will not differ too much in their outlook on New Age.

contact with New Age will likely soon discover the flagrant dissonance between the cult frame and empirical reality. Hence, we arrive at

> *Conjecture 6-3*: The adoption of the cult frame not only inhibits the mobilization of the most skillful movement entrepreneurs, that is new middle class members, but it also is most likely to be adopted by them.

Conclusions

Let me sum up the other main observations that can be made with respect top the cult frame and draw some intermediary conclusions, as to how these observations support or disprove hypotheses of my theoretical framework.

> *Observation 6-8*: If a story on New Age can be framed with the help of the cult frame, it likely will be framed with the latter's help. The framing of New Age story as a cult story increases its likelihood to be published and increases its chances to be published in a prominent place of the newspaper.

and

> *Observation 6-9*: External framings of New Age rely considerably more on the cult frame than do internal framings.

As the cult frame labels New Age as deviant and morally illegitimate, it comes to no surprise that New Age participants and publications are less prone to frame their movement in these terms. However, given that the fact that their is little empirical validity to the claim that New Age displays elements of a cult as described above, the strong presence of the cult frame is at odds with the "empirical credibility" (Snow & Benford 1988) hypothesis and instead, Gamson's (1988: 227) "narrative fidelity" concept. The cult frame is simply one of the more enduring cultural themes that have existed long before New Age has emerged. Hence, we can add support to the all too familiar

> *Conjecture 6-4:* Masterframes such as the cult frame enjoy high cultural resonances even when they fly in the face of empirical reality.

In some cases, most notably in the case of nationhood, these mechanics work in favor of collective actors that can seize a masterframe for their collective identity, in the case of New Age they hamper its mobilization potential for collective action. Does that mean the empirical credibility argument is altogether void? I do not think so. In contrast, I hypothesize that journalists have recurred to the cult frame in New Age reporting precisely because they lack empirical contact with the movement. Framing New Age as a cult then grew out of the ignorance for New Age and the routine application of an established frame for new religious

phenomena. Had there been closer contact with the movement, the cult frame probably would have never been utilized for New Age.

New Age Proper Frame

Congruence with the cult frame might make a story attractive for prominent placement in the media, but what I call the *New Age proper frame*, is found much more frequently in my sample. Indeed, more than half (57%) of all articles that frame New Age in some way (*n=1,175*) contain one or more of the framing devices that define the New Age proper frame. However, the frame has been dubbed New Age p r o p e r frame not only because it is the dominant frame in New Age reporting. In addition to its high frequency and in contrast to the cult frame, this frame has not merely been keyed on another frame, but also has itself been keyed. That is, p h e n o m e n a o t h e r t h a n N e w A g e h a v e b e e n d e s c r i b e d w i t h t h e h e l p o f t h i s f r a m e . The core elements of the New Age proper frame are:

> (1) persons with similar attitudes or "lifestyles" that
>
> (2) command over considerable monetary resources,
>
> (3) but are emotionally vulnerable and sensitive and
>
> (4) lack direction and persistence. The practices they embrace display
>
> (5) a lack of authenticity or artificiality,
>
> (6) a lack of professionality,
>
> (7) lack of knowledgeability and skills.

The New Age proper frame came into existence almost concomitantly with the emergence of the movement. One of the first, if not the first full-length article that is primarily concerned with what can be considered the beginnings of the New Age movement (as a phenomenon in the mass media) starts on the front-page of the October 16, 1977 *Washington Post*'s "Style" segment.[295] This piece is about a group exploring the teachings of Georgi I. Gurdjeff. It is entitled *Following the Master in Search of the Self* and already contains many of the elements

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[295] Searching the *Lexis/Nexis* "NEWS" database (that currently covers only the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* during the 1970s) with the search term "new w/1 age," this is the first article that unequivocally refers to the New Age movement as it is defined here. As early as November 14, 1971, the *New York Times Book Review* did publish an article on <u>n</u>ew <u>a</u>ge farming (page 6). However, in my reading this article merely points toward some developments within the late counterculture and cannot yet be considered part of <u>N</u>ew <u>A</u>ge. For the present argument it does not matter, though, if one would consider the latter article an earlier print media document than the *Washington Post* article I favor, as a predating of New Age would only strengthen the ensuing argument.

that later will define reporting on the New Age. Above all, it depicts a closely knit group of Gurdjeff adherents that obviously c a n n o t be considered part of New Age and thus reveals the apparent non-familiarity of the writer — Michael Kernan — with the New Age movement. It emphasizes the charismatic authority New Age leaders apparently exert over their following already in the title ("following the master"), it ridicules the clientele, derides the vast variety of practices utilized in New Age, locates the origins of these practices in the distant past, but suggests their execution as amateurish and inconsequential.

> "[B]eing American, [New Age adherents] tackle the subject like … well they tackle the subject. With the zest of a gadget salesman, they descend upon the ancient disciplines of the East. Like tiger cubs they pummel and maul the Tai Chi Chuan, the yoga techniques, the Hindu techniques that take a lifetime to master. They swarm to join classes, hear lectures, speed-read books that were a millennium in the writing."

Like in the cult frame, there is no driving actor among the New Age rank-and-file, but this time there neither exists a charismatic leader who creates coherently acting New Age groups. At most some "hucksters" or "charlatans" attempt to earn some money from the essentially drifting New Agers:

> "New Age hucksterism […, for example] offers 'sensory therapies' that promise to either soothe you to sleep or jolt you awake. Tired? Rub Energy Boost gel ($15 for two ounces) on your chest for quick surge of renewed stamina. Stressed? Who says you can't get serenity from a bottle? Just rub Peace of Mind on your temples ($10 for five ounces)."[296]

As in this example, the fact that New Age goods and services are sold and not distributed for free by volunteers is emphasized. In fact, in my sample 187 articles, i.e. roughly one eighth of all articles and about one sixth of all articles that frame New Age in some way, allude to the business aspect of New Age, a finding that replicates older research findings (Hall 1988: 64S). Implicit in this emphasis is frequently not only that New Age businesspersons overcharge in the opinion of the journalist, but often also that it is inappropriate for New Age as a social, cultural or religious movement to be overly concerned with financial transactions in the first place. Worse, the strife for money is also part and parcel of the cult frame, which facilitates an eventual frame bridging between cult and New Age proper frames. To be sure, the emphasis on money transactions is, so to speak, empirically grounded. New Age indeed has to rely more on business organizations than other movements, as it lacks alternative

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[296] Darnton, Nina: "The Politics of Bath Oil," *Newsweek*, October 22, 1990, p. 69.

institutional underpinnings and material resources. Yet, in the frame described here the business aspect is less an isomorphic description of the actual organizational outlook of the movement, but instead is utilized to amplify the allegation that New Age lacks authenticity. New Agers are portrayed as "yuppies trying to buy the staircase to heaven."[297] In essence,

> "[w]henever this kind of exploration becomes self-serving and profit-oriented it ceases to be connected to divine reality and is dangerous stuff"[298]

Or, in the more sober language of the British *Guardian*:

> "The connection between money and New Age spirituality leaves a lot of participants uncomfortable. It's noticeable how many people 'transformed' by New Age, then develop careers as practitioners — therapists, astrologers et al. — w i t h v e s t e d   f i n a n c i a l   i n t e r e s t s   i n   i t . It strikes us as dodgy, we are not used to paying for our spirituality — our ancestors did that."[299]

The same or similar observations could undeniably be made about New Age's competitors in the religious realm, that is, churches and new religious movements other than New Age. But although church employees and enterprises do share with New Age professionals an economic interest in the dissemination of their religious beliefs among an as large as possible clientele, church religion is hardly ever confronted with the business aspect of its organization. This discrepancy can be explained with the more subtle, if not concealing mechanisms through which religious services and monetary transactions are related in church religion (Zinser 1997: 33). Church priests do not charge directly for their services, but instead are employees of their church or denomination, which in turn is mainly financed through contributions from church members or, in some West European states, even through taxes administered by the state. In the New Age movement this connection is more visible, as most New Age practitioners must directly charge for their services, because they do not enjoy the organizational backup ministers in established churches can rely on. Many New Age therapists themselves have construed this situation as a problem and in turn have relabeled their fees into "suggested donations," a practice that has not rendered the media perception of the movement, though.

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[297] Collins, Glenn: "A Magician Breaks Out of the Mold (and the Pack)," *New York Times*, September 23, 1988, p. C26.

[298] Scott, Debra M.: "East End a Center for the New Age," *New York Times* (Long Island edition), December 11, 1994, p. 13LI/1.

[299] Bunting, Madeleine: "Coming of Age," *The Guardian - G2 International*, October 8, 1998, pp. 2f, emphasis mine.

Artificiality

The prevalence of the profit motive in New Age reporting is of some relevance from a theoretical perspective. First, it supports Snow & Benford's (1988: 208ff) thesis of the importance of empirical credibility for the viability of frames. While it may very well be true that from an ontogenetic point of view their notion of empirical credibility shows that their constructionist theory is firmly rooted in epistemological positivism (Gamson 1992a: 69f), in practice at least in modernity it is true that empirical credibility does enhance the impact of frames. The existence of the profit motive indeed i s important a n d apparent and therefore easily empirically detectable in the dynamics of the New Age movement, thus there does exist some empirical rationale for the frequent reporting on this aspect of the movement. At the same time, the differential emphasis of the profit motive in news stories on New Age and established churches also shows that empirical credibility is a helpful, but by no means a sufficient condition for the viability of a framing device and hence its correspondent frame. The strong emphasis of the business aspect of the New Age movement in newspaper reporting, thus, is also evidence for the proposition that the class background of a movement mediated through the organizational outlook influences the framing of a movement in public discourse and consequently shapes the impact of the movement.

The claim that New Age is "artificial" is though most forcefully put forth in comparison with other collective actors, who engage in the same or similar practices, but with apparent authenticity and thus legitimacy. One recurring theme is that the adoption of Native American traditions by the New Age movement is superficial, not authentic, and even harmful to American Indian ethnicity:

> "Unlike the plastic Jesus on a car dashboard, 'plastic shamans' are very real: a l u c r a t i v e group within the larger New Age spirituality movement. 'Native elders have become very concerned with the trivialization of Indian rituals. There are weekend retreats to make you a shaman. We resent Lynn Andrews (the white author of several best-selling books on Native American spirituality), especially the way her books are placed alongside g e n u i n e l y Native spiritual titles in bookstores.' […] Italians expressed amazement that these actresses were really Indians from Brooklyn, that their father was really from the Kuna Indians of Panama's San Blas Island, that their mother was really from the Winnebago tribe of Upstate New York. 'They thought that there were no Indians left,' Mayo [, allegedly a 'real, legitimate' Native American] recalled. […] A German woman introduced herself to the trio as a

> Sioux Indian. 'She even adopted a Lakota name,' said Mayo. 'I didn't know whether
> to laugh or cry.'"[300]

While again there very well might be an actual empirical referent that would support the claim that most, if not almost all New Agers are only superficially acquainted with Native American practices (and, more often than not, is only dimly aware of the superficiality of his or her knowledge), the important observation here is that claims of New Agers to what is considered the American Indian heritage, is considered *a priori* morally illegitimate and practically not viable. Of course, researchers who have internalized the constructionist approach to ethnicity can hardly escape the oddity of Mayo's concept of American Indians: On the one hand, he ridicules the attempt of an (apparently primordially defined) German to become Sioux. At the same time, he effortlessly situates a late-20th-century metropolitan New Yorker within the decidedly non-urban Sioux tradition. Since there is no hint at any doubt on Mayo's classifications throughout the article, we can safely assume that the author of the article and the bulk of the readership would share this assessment, notwithstanding the fact that it lacks theoretical rigor and empirical credibility.[301]

Unprofessionality

But New Age is not only consider to be unauthentic, since it strives for unattainable goals, but also, because New Agers are not committed enough to acquire professional skills:

> "Anyone can make New Age music. Let your cat run a cross an autoharp."[302]

The image of un p r o f e s s i o n a l i t y   d i d   not haunt New Age (music) from its inception, though. In 1982, the *Humane Society* was still "p r a i s i n g [Paul Winter's] music as the sound of the New Age"[303] on the pages of the *Christian Science Monitor*. On such premises, it was still possible to consider New Age music as the precursor or symbol for action, probably even collective action:

> "Winter is a 'New Age' activist, a firm believer in the concept that all life —
> mankind, animals, and earth — makes one harmonious whole. 'Missa Gaia'

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[300] Koehler, Robert: "An Indian Message that Carries a Punch Line: Stage - Spiderwoman Theater Celebrates Its Native American Heritage With Stories and Comedy that Counter Stereotypes," *Los Angeles Times*, November 12, 1990, p. F6, emphasis mine.

[301] The view that New Age appropiations of indigenous traditions violate collective rights of indigenous peoples is not alien to sociological discourse, either (see, e.g., Neuenfeldt 1998; Whittier 1995: 160).

[302] Mansfield, Howard: "Perils Along the Culture Trail," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 11, 1988, p. 12.

[303] Marquand, Cynthia B.: "Wolf Howls and Seal Barks Become a Concert in Paul Winter's Hands," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 22, 1982, p.18.

[Winter's album] is a translation of this activism into a musical call to worship that is both environmental and ecumenical."[304]

Two years later, Winter already disassociates himself from New Age in media presentations of his music.

"Winter is somewhat uncomfortable with the term 'new-age music', a term that refers to the proliferation of what he calls 'syrupy space-out music.'"[305]

That does not mean that Winter has become less New Age in terms of his worldview. He has no problem to write in 1997 for the *New Age Journal* with an implicit understanding that he belongs to one of the pathbreakers for New Age p r a c t i c e s ; Winter simply rejects the label New Age.[306]

It is particularly in the music sector, where many actors consider themselves artists — and thus professionals — that the image of New Age as being desultory has led to a reluctance of being labeled as such: "*Tangerine Dream* eschews New Age."[307] Michael Hedges shows "dissatisfaction with the New Age labeling."[308] "[C]onsidering his New Age identification, [George] Winston describes himself as a performer whose principal influences derive from rhythm & blues and pop music."[309] Liz Story "attempts to escape the […] New Age association;"[310] Such frequently ridiculed musician as Yanni "resists [the New Age term] firmly"[311] and, allegedly, even widely derided John "Tesh's heart isn't in the New Age bins."[312] Despite the fact that the *Windham Hill* record label went from insignificance to being a major player in the international record market largely because of its successful marketing as New Age label (Berman 1988: 251), its founder William Ackerman "deplores

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[304] Foster, Catherine: "Daring Young Pianist: 'Talking With' Exultant 'Missa Gaia'," *Christian Science Monitor*, Pullout Section "New England", November 8, 1984, p. B4.

[305] Kolson, Ann: "Paul Winter music blends voices of nature, humanity," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, December 19, 1986, p. D15.

[306] Winter, Paul, untitled, *New Age Journal*, February 1997, p. 138.

[307] Infusino, Divina: "Tangerine Dream Eschews New Age," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 22, 1988, p. C4.

[308] Heckman, Don: "Guitarist Michael Hedges Goes Heavy Mental," *Los Angeles Times*, April 22, 1988, p.6/6.

[309] Heckman, Don: "Seasoned Winston," *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1987, p.6/6.

[310] Kohlhaase, Bill: "Pianist Liz Story Is Very Sensitive About Her New Age: She loathes the Catch-All Label, Which 'Carries All The Baggage Of Crystals And Brown Rice And Meditation," *Los Angeles Times*, Orange County Edition, April 5, 1991, p. F19.

[311] Lafave, Kenneth: "Yanni's Perfect Pitch," *Arizona Republic* May 21, 1995, p.F1.

[312] Caputo, Salvatore: "Tesh's Lament: Broadcaster/Musician Endures Abuse, Keeps Following His Muse," *Arizona Republic*, August 23, 1996, p. D1.

the term"[313] New Age, even "almost bleed[s] when [he] hear[s] the term."[314] In 1985 New Age already seems to have acquired such a negative connotation in the music business that *Newsweek* in an article on the genre's success asks, "[w]hy isn't anybody willing to claim New Age music?"[315]

But not only New Age musicians avoid the New Age tag because of allegations of unprofessionality that come with it. Todd Berger, author of the book *Zen Driving*, a quintessential example of what is consider New Age literature by the movement itself, claims that "it chagrins [him] that this is labeled a New Age book."[316] Berger is not alone in his distance towards the proto-movement despite his economic dependency on New Age customers.

> "Many sympathizers with things 'New Age' flee the label. It 'has a very flaky load on it,' admit[s] Joan Duncan Oliver, editor of the monthly *New Age Journal*, an aura of 'crystals, and Shirley MacLaine and Ouiji boards.'"[317]

Like Berger, more and more book authors and publishers try to evade the New Age label in the 1990s. At the same time, contents and target audience of their products remain essentially the same and are simply sold under different labels (Melton [1986] 1992b: 177f).

Recall the importance of a label for collective identity. The persistence of a label can simulate a group's *mêmete*, even if in substance, a group might change dramatically over time. Hence the unprofessionality component of the New Age proper frame either triggers a drop-out of members, namely professionals, crucial for a development of New Age towards collective action, or at best leads to a name change, which also hampers allegiance to New Age.

Ambiguity

The final element of the New Age proper frame is the assertion that New Age is an ambiguous or vague phenomenon. What New Agers might consider an eclectic integration of

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[313] Fruchter, Rena: "Shhh! Don't Call His Music 'New Age'," *New York Times*, New Jersey Edition, September 11, 1988, p. 12NJ/19.

[314] Stewart, Zan: "New Age Music Money Machine," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, January 31, 1988, p. 22.

[315] Barol, Bill, Mark D. Uehling and George Raine: "Muzak for a New Age," *Newsweek*, May 13, 1985, p. 68.

[316] Associated Press (ed.): "Brotherly Advice: Escape Fast Lane with Zen Driving," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 5, 1988, p. D1.

[317] Steinfels, Peter: "Beliefs," *New York Times*, July 13, 1996, p. 1/10.

different traditions, the popular press depicts as unconscious merging of incompatible believes. Typical summary statements on New Age read:

> "All in all, the New Age does express a cloudy sort of religion, claiming vague connections with both Christianity and the major faiths of the East (New Agers like to say that Jesus spent 18 years in India absorbing Hinduism and the teachings of Buddha), plus an occasional dab of pantheism and sorcery."[318]

> "New Age is not a religion but a fuzzy idea sold in forms as different as tarot cards and meditation on videotape. [… M]any New Age approaches […] cloak self-absorption in a veneer of spirituality, [and] are not really about God and faith."[319]

Ambiguity and vagueness certainly do occur in New Age thought. However, media coverage overemphasizes this aspect of the movement. For instance, recall that New Age frames are frequently keyed on Christian themes. The media relying on their (unwarranted) image of New Age ideology as importations from Eastern religions, do consider this defining criterion of New Age thought as an ambiguity:

> "'Much of this starts in Eastern religion and in forms of the occult, but it's so vague that it just blends in. A lot of it even sounds kind of Christian'"[320]

> "Under which ideals will the world unite? Most New Agers won't say. The problem with this ambiguity is that it leaves the movement open for expropriation by a host of people promoting special interests, such as the authors of this book. Slickly promoted as an introduction to 'the New Age,' this book is actually an attempt to show that the movement's goals are grounded in 'Christian thought.'"[321]

Note that the use of Christian thought figures by itself does not imply ambiguity. Only the widespread, but from a movement-internal perspective inadequate notion that New Age would rely (exclusively) on Eastern religious thought in the construction of its ideology renders this aspect of New Age ideology ambiguous.

In fact, the ambiguity aspect of New Age is such a defining characteristic of the New Age proper frame that it is used to illustrate the ambiguity of non New Age phenomena: *Newsweek*, for instance, speaks of "our New Age susceptibility to vague, exotic

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[318] Friedrich, Otto *et al.*, *op. cit.*, *supra nota* 273.

[319] James, Caryn: "This will go down as summer of films that Look for Dad," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 9, 1989, p. E-3.

[320] Mattingly, Terry: "New Age Message Finally Has Soaked In," *Arizona Republic*, March 19, 1994 p. E1.

[321] Raksin, Alex: "'Pilgrim's Guide to the New Age,' by Alice and Stephen Lawhead," *Los Angeles Times*, November 13, 1986, p. BR-14.

religiosity."[322] A *New York Times* book review scolds an author that he "too frequently strings things together with vague New Age phrases."[323] The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* debunks some scientists, who

> "in classic New Age manner fuse Fuzzy Logic with Far Eastern wisdoms. Zen Buddhism and Taoism with their vagueness and ambiguities are the prototypes of Fuzzy Logic."[324]

The ambiguity aspect of the New Age proper frame thus also amplifies allegations of the unprofessionality of New Age, as definitiveness is a central aspect of modern science, the epitome of professionality (Bauman 1991).

Consequences for Collective Action Frames

That the New Age proper frame is not favorable for the stimulation of collective action is almost self-evident. Its artificiality component delegitimizes New Age as a legitimate actor in civil society. As I have discussed at some length above, New Age certainly loses legitimacy when it comes into conflict with other, "authentic" actors, for example, Native Americans. But even if its goals and practices do not directly interfere with the interests (or presumed interests) of other collective actors in civil society, it seems that in an environment, in which most agents of social change have by and large tacitly "adopted" a "multicultural" perspective, which favors essentialist and primordially coded identities, the framing as an more or less ad hoc community lacking deeper historical or biological roots is unfavorable to collective mobilizations.

The second framing device, namely the emphasis on the business character of New Age even further delegitimizes New Age. In a public arena inhabited by voluntary associations without expressed profit goal, the structure of New Age as an industry does not resonate well with the established actors.

A third framing element, the superficiality and amateurishness with which the movement practices are presumably carried out, finally impedes cognitive liberation. Indeed, one is tempted to suggest that the constant reiteration of the superficiality and resulting futility —

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[322] Plaens, Peter: "Palms and Circumstance: Japan's new sculptors favor natural ingredients," *Newsweek*, United States Edition, August 20, 1990, p.64.

[323] Wood, Joe: "'A Life Of Gwendolyn Brooks' by George E. Kent," *New York Times*, March 18, 1990, p. 7/21.

[324] Krassnitzer, Michael: "Die Logik des Abschmeckens. Fuzzy Logic hat viele Fans, ist aber unter Mathematikern und Logikern nach wie vor umstritten," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, October 7, 1995.

an astounding two thirds of all articles that frame New Age in some way contain this device — results in cognitive confinement.

Unlike the cult frame, the New Age proper frame does enjoy some empirical credibility. A quick view into the New Age literature I presented above shows that many theoretical propositions made in some, if not most, books that have been written for the New Age movement are not meticulously documented.

Still, not all New Agers are superficial in the exercise of their practices. In particular, New Age musicians frequently do command considerable knowledge and skills within their field of specialization. Unfortunately for the development of the collective action capabilities of the frame, however, these individuals are not interested in a reconstruction of the New Age frame, but instead attempt to locate themselves outside the frame or at the very least at its fringes. To repeat, even William Ackerman, who arguably made his fortune in the New Age market, "insists on a distinction between New Age and the music produced by *Windham Hill Records*."[325] Thus, instead of defending a frame that has been of some utility to some New Age entrepreneurs, these potential New Age spokespersons denounce their New Age identity. Why is that the case?

From a movement insider perspective New Age is a decidedly universalist identity. Thus, internal movement construction puts little incentive on the disassociation attempts. Instead, some successful movement insiders have adopted negative external framings of the movement. It seems too simplistic, though, to assume that this process was solely triggered through the daunting framings of New Age through outsiders. After all, other leaders of movements which faced similar obstacles at their inception — say, gay liberationists of the 60s or lesbian feminists of the early 70s — did not seek to disassociate themselves from their group, but instead appropriated the formerly almost universally negatively valued label and reversed its evaluation through the ingroup and a sizable part of the bystander public.

However, for new social movement participants, their movement is the primary marker for their self-identity. For New Age leaders that is not the case. Their primary identity is their profession, that is musicians and writers for most of the New Age renegades. These persons have abandoned New Age because it has been the less viable of two competing identities.

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[325] Fruscher, Rena: "Shhh! …," *op. cit.*, *supra nota* 313.

Although it has frequently been acknowledged that different identities often compete with each other, rarely an attempt has been made to decide, which identities take precedence over others. Oberschall and Kim (1996) have ventured into theoretical blank spot. They offer a model that elegantly and convincingly combines economic utility theory with the identity paradigm to show, how and when identities compete with each other. The core assumption of their theory is that people shift their identities according to the economic utility the adoption of a certain identity might yield. The authors use the example of a fictitious village of "Serbs" and "Croats," where the respective ethnic identities compete with a common villager identity. Starting out with a fairly mixed population covering the range between die-hard Serbs and Croats and adamant "Yugoslav villagers," they show that ethnically distinct associations with attached economic benefits gradually increases the incompatibility of ethnic and villager identity. As ethnic identity becomes more salient to those joining the association, "moderate" Serbs and Croats gradually shift towards a more exclusionary interpretation of ethnic identity. Thus, the institutional setup is the key operating variable in Oberschall and Kim's model. Their central hypothesis can be summarized as follows.

> *Conjecture 6-5*: The stronger the differential institutional support of two competing collective identities is, the more likely the individuals that have adopted both identities in their self-definition will reject the less supported identity.[326]

This conjecture sharply qualifies the thesis that,

> "[w]hen groups lack their own institutions and a political consciousness, they will concentrate on identity for empowerment and community growth." (Bernstein 1997: 554)

New Age falls certainly into the category of groups that lack sizable institutions. Neither do New Agers command any political consciousness to speak of. Yet, far from concentrating on identity issues, central New Age members shed their New Age identity in order to remain rooted in their professional environment. Their identities as musicians, writers or other artists are backed up by professional organizations: record labels, book publishers *etc*. For example, in 1998, Michael Hedges has produced, among others, most songs of a highly acclaimed Britpop album,[327] which caters to the so-called alternative music market with its new middle

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[326] This is a special case of Esser's (1999: 248) thesis that individuals adopt those frame that result in the provision of selective incentives.

[327] Manic Street Preachers: "*This Is My Truth, Tell Me Yours*," Epic/SONY Music 1998. The record received outstanding ratings *inter alia* in *Q-Magazine*, October 1998, and *Musikexpress/Sounds*, October 1998.

class audience. It is at least doubtful that such a trajectory would have been possible, if he did not have shed the tarnish of unprofessionality an association with New Age would have entailed.[328]

New Age, thus, fits Oberschall and Kim's thesis far better than it does Bernstein's. In fact, not even the gay and lesbian movements Bernstein cites in support for her hypothesis have really lacked any institutions or political consciousness from their onset. Instead, as I will later discuss at some length, these movements could fairly easily recur to some institutions, most notably colleges and universities, which — while not being their own institutions — could be utilized for the initial organization of the movement. In addition, only when gay and lesbian activists had already developed some political consciousness, a focus on identity issues as a means for empowerment was made possible in the first place.

New Age thus faces severe obstacles in the construction of an identity for collective action proper, because central movement figures — lacking institutional support through the movement — rather renounce the movement than attempt to redefine it. A change in movement framing through internal movement actors is hence obstructed, and there is little chance that New Age's identity will be changed through movement-external actors. Still, there some traces of a frame that might trigger some collective action proper exists in some articles. These articles employ what I have termed the yin-and-yang frame.

Yin-and-Yang Frame

"There is no theme without a countertheme." (Gamson 1992b: 135). Frames always also entail the opportunity for their reversal. Naturally, this is also true for the New Age proper frame. What has been defined in the latter as ambiguity, could with equal plausibility be viewed as desirable eclecticism. Unprofessionality might as well be interpreted as ease of proficiency or unpretentiousness. The profit drive that has shattered the authenticity of New Age could have just as easily been a symbol for rationality, desirability, or success. Finally, non-authenticity could as well mean open-mindedness or innovation. Yet, seldom any of these positive attributes characterize New Age in the mass media. When they do, what I have termed the *yin-and-yang frame* surfaces.

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[328] At the same time, it also shows that there are at least some genuine professionals within New Age, an observation that taints the empirical credibility of the New Age proper frame.

Clearly, the yin-and-yang frame is by far the weakest frame, both in terms of frequency and amplitude. Usually, it is only presented after the existence of one of the other two frames has been acknowledged. Take an article about the New Age bookstore *Gaia* as an example:

> "Gaia, which opened in 1987 to offer 'spiritual, feminist, ecological and cross-cultural religious perspectives,' reflects a different face of Berkeley culture. It has a New Age feel — self-help books, drums, fetishes, Tarot cards and music — and skeptics might be tempted to dismiss the enterprise as just so much pseudo-spiritual nonsense."[329]

Here the principally affirmative remark on the progressive and eclectic nature of the New Age store immediately elicits a defense against possible dissenting views some "skeptics," read: newspaper readers and customers, might likely hold. Take a different article on the self-help current of New Age defends New Age practices. It claims that

> "[w]hat [New Age practitioner Vernon] Howard offers might sound hopelessly hooky, [...] but his followers find in him a profound source of hope."[330]

Again, the article author defensively guards against possible criticism, which he expects many of his readers would levy against New Age practices. In this vein, the central elements of the yin-and-yang frame — innovation and open-mindedness or eclecticism — are almost always either discounted or it is doubted that these elements accurately characterize New Age. What are the central elements of the yin-and-yang frame? These are:

(1) The notion that New Age is an avantgarde movement, which paves the way for major innovations
(2) by way of synthesizing a vast array of different ideas and techniques, which draw on a host of different traditions.

Obviously, this frame replicates two elements from the internal New Age frame, but it places less emphasis on the individualism and *harmony with nature* themes employed in protagonist framings of New Age.

Innovation

The most frequently, if still rarely brought-up aspect of the yin-and-yang frame is the notion of New Age as an avantgarde movement promoting innovative ideas.

> "Like other musical movements before it, new age has yielded both innovators and charlatans."[331]

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[329] Colby, Anne: "Book Soup: Savoring The Individualistic Flavors and Styles of Bay Area Bookstores," *Los Angeles Times*, May 1, 1994, p. L10.

[330] Chawkins, Steve: "New Age Prophets Offer Mystic Roadmap Into Inner Bliss," *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1988, section 9, p. 1.

"Revolutionary … baffling … innovative … mellow … wacky!

Those are just a few of the reactions you'll probably hear as pop fans get their first earful this weekend of the ground-breaking new radio format at [New Age station] *KTWV-FM (The WAVE)."*[332]

"[The human-potential movement] introduced a smorgasbord of new therapies offering everything from s e r i o u s   i n n o v a t i o n s   t o   f a n c y   g i m m i c k s for instant fulfillment. Eventually the human potential movement was absorbed into the present-day New Age movement, with its wide variety of healing methods drawn from just about every nonscientific tradition, including primitive rites, Eastern spiritual practices and the occult."[333]

"Religious innovation flourishes on the frontier, and as our frontier moved west, so did the cutting edge of the American spiritual search. […] It coninues today in California and throughout the far West, […] where Eastern mysticism, Native American shamanism and avant-garde psychology simmer in the spiritual ragout of the New Age movement."[334]

As it is characteristic for articles employing the yin-and-yang frame, all of the above quotations compare the innovative force of New Age with elements of the New Age proper frame. Thus, the adoption of the yin-and-yang frame remains always tentative and limited. Sometimes, even the partial approval of New Age novelty is quickly disassociated from New Age itself. Practices for which New Age has been a major trail blazer are considered as being separate from the proto-movement itself. Take chiropractice.

"Welcome to the world of network chiropractic, a subtle manipulation of the thin sheath of tissue covering the spinal cord that is nothing if not gentle to the bone.

You might feel a twitch, a vibration, or just the liberation of a constricted breath — a sign that the body's innate intelligence may be freeing itself to express the true you. Physically. Mentally. And emotionally.

Just another New Age mind trip, you say? A new variation on a tired theme?

Hocus-pocus?

Richard Kaye, a doctor of chiropractic for 14 years and former president of the San Diego County Chiropractic Society, harbored such doubt until he learned what network chiropractic was all about.

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[331] Varga, George: "New Age Music, Whatever It Really Is, Gets Recognized," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, February 22, 1987, p. E-1.

[332] Goldstein, Patrick: "Will 'The Wave' Wash in A New Radio Age?," *Los Angeles Times*, February 15, 1987, Calendar; p. 86.

[333] Miller, Michael Vincent: "How We Suffer Now," *New York Times*, May 17, 1992, p.7/1, emphasis mine.

[334] Lattin, Don: "Americans Picking Religions on a Buffet Line: Seekers are Mixing Spiritual Traditions to Form Own 'Churches'," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 24, 1993, p. B-7.

> Now he and his wife, Phyllis Brooks, D.C., who share an Old Town office, are the only network practitioners in a county with some 600 chiropractors — and only two of 100 to 150 in the United States.
>
> 'I tried to analyze it and figure it out, and I got to the point where I didn't have to — it's so powerful,' says Kaye."[335]

Take a 'spiritualization' of labor relations.

> "At some firms, a corporate emphasis on something other than higher profits is n o t a New Age-ish concept of the nascent '90s.
>
> Johnson & Johnson, Motorola, Xerox, Corning Glass and 3-M are among major corporations cited for their innovative employee programs. One of the more common questions put to Vaill is whether a spiritualized workplace will increase profits."[336]

In both of these cases, practices that were well established within the New Age movement have been adopted by professionals. Professional approval of New Age practices, of course, does not fit the unprofessionality aspect of the New Age proper frame. As a result, however, not a shift in the frame content towards a professionalization of New Age has taken place. Instead, those New Age practices that have been adopted by professionals have become dissociated from New Age.

Eclecticism

The second element of the yin-and-yang frame — the proto-movement's eclecticism — is similarly discounted through a constant invocation of negative elements from the New Age proper frame.[337] For instance, an article that mentions the eclectic theology of *CUT* buries the potential approval of *CUT*'s eclecticism in accusations of high participation costs and irrationality:

> "[CUT] followers, who paid up to $6,000 each to reserve shelter space, have tons of food, a lot of guns and their theologically eclectic New Age faith."[338]

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[335] Williams, Jack: "A Subtle Yet Spine-tingling Development: Chiropractic Innovation Touches Nerve," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 19, 1991, p. E-1.

[336] Voboril, Mary: "Spirit of Big Business Gets More Spiritual," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, August 20, 1991, p. D-3, emphasis mine.

[337] This is hardly a surprising observation, since, as Gamson & Wolfsfeld (1993: 123) have pointed out, the "narrower movement's demands, the more likely it is to receive coverage that presents it sympathetically to the broader public." Although New Age does not place any demands in the strict sense, its broad melange of ideological elements is nevertheless at odds with a number of dominant cultural codes.

[338] Anonymous: "Digging In," *New York Times*, March 18, 1990, p. 4/7.

In a different instance, eclecticism and avantgardism of the New Age *Esalen* center become immediately modified through the business and non-authenticity elements of the New Age proper frame:

> "Esalen had already become synonymous with hot tubs, avant-garde psychology, mysticism and massage.
>
> If there's a theology for California's eclectic spiritual scene, a complete menu for Religion a la Carte, it's the Esalen catalog"[339]

In third instance, New Age's eclecticism merely serves to illustrate the closure (!) of the New Age believe system, after an intensive attack of New Age by a Christian church official, who employs the New Age proper frame. Here, it is alleged that eclecticism serves to repeal any criticism:

> "'History, learning and the vast poignant drama of human longing and suffering can be set aside. In matters of religious faith, this is Disneyland posing as Chartres.'
>
> The fact that Dr. Kennedy ultimately holds the church's own shortcomings responsible for these programs' popularity is not going to mollify New Agers or convince them that they have been treated fairly.
>
> But one suspects that they have something in their eclectic arsenal of exercises and ideas to deal with this."[340]

Alternatively, if New Age's versatility is interpreted positively, it is depicted as an exception within the proto-movement. For instance, in an overall positive review of Andrew Weil's work, his "eclectic" approach is sharply contrasted with the one of other New Age authors, although in a metaphorical allusion these very same authors were considered eclectic just before eclecticism was chosen as distinctive characteristic of Weil:

> "Other author-healers, from Dr. Bernie Siegel to Marianne Williamson, have enriched themselves and their publishers by offering a b u f f e t   o f a l t e r n a t i v e   a p p r o a c h e s   that range from meditation and visualization to the curative powers of love and positive thinking.
>
> What d i s t i n g u i s h e s Weil from the rest is his radical eclecticism."[341]

Thus, the eclecticism theme, just like the innovation theme only supplements elements of the New Age proper frame or cult frame. This supplementary role is also evident in the location of the yin-and-yang frame within the papers.

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[339] Lattin, Don: "Americans Picking Religions …," *op. cit.*, *supra nota* 334.

[340] Steinfels, Peter: "Beliefs," *New York Times*, July 13, 1996, p. 1/10.

Location in the Paper

Most of the times the yin-and-yang frame of New Age is hidden in the letters to the editor section of the paper. Typically, an article that has renounced the New Age movement, receives an answer from a New Ager in the following fashion:

> "Consider the possibilities to look at a new way of surviving here with the elements. Innovation, invention and New Age, balanced thinking is at an all-time high. How close do we get to the end before we accept that our old ways merely serve to enlighten us to imagine a better way?"[342]

Only in very rare exceptions the yin-and-yang frame in its "pure" form is utilized in the editorial part of the paper. Even in these exceptional cases, however, some remaining doubts are articulated.

> "[Joan] Tower's eclectic, post-modern (read: classical new age), two-year-old concerto is bright, tight, amusing and virtuosic; it holds the interest in every moment, at least on first hearing."[343]

Most of the time, though, not only the empirical credibility of the yin-and-yang frame is assaulted. Instead one of the two other frames take precedence, as it has been illustrated with the newspaper quotations in the previous two sections. Thus, in sum, the yin-and-yang frame can at best be characterized as a supplementary frame, which is almost always is modified by either New Age proper frame or cult frame. Therefore, it enjoys only a low narrative fidelity; as its "story line" is constantly interrupted.

Empirical Adequacy of the Three-Frame-Model

Two, probably three, frames thus dominate the framing of New Age within the bystander public. Most studies that present empirical findings on the use of frames stop at this point. They stipulate a set of frames that is employed in the framing of a phenomenon and subsequently present the findings on frequency and distribution of the utilization of the distilled frames across different actors. "This has [already] resulted in a rather long laundry list of types of frames" (Benford 1997: 414). With this list does not only come a "descriptive bias" with its ensuing "trivialization of the framing perspective," (*ibid.*) but also an

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[341] Kluger, Jeffrey with Alice Park: "Mr. Natural: Millions Of Americans Swear By The Alternative Medicine of Dr. Andrew Weil. But Is Anyone Really Getting Better?," *Time*, May 12, 1997, p. 68.

[342] Sudmayer, Alice Jean: "Honor Mother Earth," *San Diego Union-Tribune* October 25, 1989, p. B-8.

[343] Cariaga, Daniel: "Sergiu Comissiona Returns to Chamber Orchestra Podium," *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 1990, p. F-5, emphasis mine.

uneasiness about the empirical adequacy of some of the proposed frames. In fact, this uneasiness has been haunting frame analysis since its inception.[344] With the help of latent class analysis this uneasiness can be held to a minimum.

Although the principles of latent class analysis have been already developed in the fifties (Hagenaars 1993: 20), it has remained an esoteric statistical method for many social scientists.[345] Basically, latent class analysis can be considered the equivalent of factor analysis for ordinally and nominally scaled variables (McCutcheon 1987: 7). Latent class analysis examines, if a set of observable indicators can meaningfully be projected onto a smaller set of latent, that is, unobservable classes. Most important theoretical concepts, among them frames, do not translate straightforwardly into easily empirically observable, that is: measurable, indicators. Latent class analysis that expressly works with latent, read: unobservable, variables is therefore in the analysis of frames superior to other log-linear models that operate exclusively with observable data. In comparison to cluster analysis, latent class analysis delivers more unequivocal results. And while it shares with factor analysis the virtue of operating with latent variables, it does not contain the caveat of requiring hard to come by interval scaled data.

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[344] Gamson, in his first review of Goffman's *Frame Analysis*, remarked two decades ago:

> "The question of whether we can train people to do frame analysis really boils down to h o w t h e   e n t e r p r i s e   i s   c o d i f i e d . If it remains a sociological art form, then only certain talented individuals with inclinations in this direction will grasp the underlying principles intuitively and be able to perform." (Gamson 1975: 605, emphasis mine)

Unfortunately despite the proliferation of frame analysis in movement studies, there has been hardly any progress in the codification of the method. An important step towards systemization has been undertaken by Hank Johnston (1995), but his methodological advances concern primarily the structure of framing processes and are silent on the identification of frames themselves. For the latter we must still rely on the skills of the individual researcher constructing the frames. Sometimes such reliance appears to stay on shaky grounds and the present study probably is no exception in this respect.

Gamson in his critique of Goffman's approach juxtaposes the artfulness of frame analysis with the dull routine of survey research, whose methodology can practically be learned and properly applied by any "conscientious clod." (*ibid*.) Is it maybe possible to appropriate part of the survey research methodology, namely the construction of theoretical models with the help of statistical counterparts for a routinization of frame analysis? Given the manifold steps from the selection sample to the construction of a first theoretical model and the fact that there exists an infinite universe of possible frames, it is obviously a too ambitious an endeavor immediately make the development a frame typology foolproof.

[345] Until the early eighties the absence of quantitative studies using latent class analysis could be explained by the frequently cumbersome estimation of latent class models. Since then, powerful computational equipment that easily performs these estimations has become widely available. The current draught in studies using this methodology seems instead to be rooted in the fact that none of the major statistical software packages (SPSS, SAS, and STATA) so far include procedures for latent class analysis. The available stand-alone programs, such as LCAG and lEM, on the other hand have probably garnished little interest because of their user-interface is not very intuitive.

Hagenaars and Halman have recognized the opportunities latent class analysis poses for the construction of typologies in sociology. However, they *inter alia* propose to construct ideal types for sociological analysis through the interpretation of latent class models that order a set of empirical indicators (Hagenaars & Halman 1989: 86). Such proceeding must be rejected, as it is incompatible with the sociologist's position of a "second order observer" (Luhmann 1990), who needs to "break" with the categories of everyday life (Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron [1973] 1991) to construct analytical categories.[346] In contrast, my goal is far more modest. I simply would like to establish, if the frames I have identified do reasonably d e s c r i b e the e m p i r i c a l l y e x i s t i n g frames.[347] After all, real world frames are unobservable empirical data and not abstract elements of sociological theory. For the application of latent class analysis, this distinction is of no relevance, which enables the testing of my typology along the lines proposed by Hagenaars and Halman.

To examine the empirical validity of the frames I have presented, I have identified ten, fairly easily observable *framing devices* that repeatedly appear in the articles I have examined. These are:

(1) The *brainwash* framing device: It has been coded as "present," if an article unequivocally refers to the c o e r c i v e recruitment to a New Age group or contains one or more of the following keywords: "brainwash*,"[348] "coerc*," or "Jonestown" and "cult." 7.1% of all valid articles, that is, those articles that contain any of the ten listed framing devices, were coded as including this device.

(2) The *charismatic leader* framing device is coded as present, if an article alluded unequivocally to the charismatic power of a person within the New Age movement, or, if one of the following keywords were present in the article: "guru," "devotee," "charlatan," "huckster*." 9.7% of all articles fulfill one of these criteria.

(3) The *business aspect* framing device was coded as present, if an article unequivocally named the profit goal of a New Age group, or, if one of the following keyword was present in the article: "yuppie." 25.1% of all valid articles fulfill one of these criteria.

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[346] For a more detailed outline of this argument, see my chapter on the epistemological framework of this study.

[347] To be painstakingly exact, I cannot even be interested in these empirical frames, as they do not "exist" in themselves, but only in relation to the conceptual framework employed here. So, I am really interested, if those real world phenomena I subsume under the concept of a frame resonate well on the frame typology I have developed.

[348] An asterisk denotes a placeholder for multiple word endings.

(4) The *no authenticity* framing device was coded at present, if an article unequivocally stated that practices that were believed to be employed by New Age were illegitimate appropriations from other groups, or, if the article contrasted practices believed to be employed by New Age with the same practices practiced by a different group, in which these practices presumably originated, or if one of the following keywords were present: "artifi*," "authentic*." 23.7% of all valid articles fulfill one of these criteria.

(5) The *no seriousness* framing device was coded at present, if an article unequivocally depicted the superficiality and inconsequentiality of practices that were believed to be employed by New Age, or, if one of the following keywords were present: "superficial*," "mumbo-jumbo," "schmuck," "quack," "squishy," "wacky," "background music," "elevator music," "loony," "dull," "babble," "wacky," "flaky," "goofy," "fad." 65.7% of all valid articles fulfill one of these criteria.

(6) The *high sensitivity* framing device was coded at present, if an article unequivocally depicted persons to believed New Age members as extremely sensitive and guided by emotions rather than their intellect, or, if one of the following keywords were present: "touchy-feely," "sensitive," "soft" (in relation to a person's character). 6.2% of all valid articles fulfill one of these criteria.

(7) The *anti-intellectualism* framing device has been coded as present, if an article unequivocally stated the incapability of being a New Age adherent and being in a leading position in a scientific or political institution, or, the following keyword was present: "loon*". 1.6% of all valid articles fulfill one of these criteria.

(8) The *eclecticism* framing device is coded as present, if an article unequivocally pictured New Age as legitimately and successfully drawing on practices believed to have originated outside the movement, or, if one of the following keywords were present in the article: "eclectic*," "diverse." 2.7% of all articles fulfill one of these criteria.

(9) The *ancient practices* framing device is coded as present, if an article unequivocally stated the origins of practices believed to be part of the movement in the distant past, or, if one of the following keywords were present in the article: "ancien*," "histor*," "primordial*." 7.2% of all articles fulfill one of these criteria.

(10) The *network* framing device is coded as present, if an article unequivocally emphasized the network structure of the movement, or, if one of the following keywords were present in the article: "network," "alternative." 0.7% of all articles fulfill one of these criteria.

These are items, whose presence or absence is fairly easily discernible, and, when confronted with the same sample of articles, every trained coder would have arrived at results similar to the ones presented here. With these "hard" data at hand, I have tested the frame typology as

Model	Two Classes, unrestricted		Two Classes, restricted		Three Classes, unrestricted/restricted		
Frame	Cult	New Age proper	Cult	New Age proper	Business	Cult	New Age proper
Class Probability	*0.54*	*0.46*	*0.59*	*0.41*	*0.12*	*0.42*	*0.46*
Brainwashing	0.13	0.00	0.12	0*	0.00	0.17	0.00
Charismatic Leader	0.14	0.04	0.16	0*	0.00	0.19	0.03
Business Aspect	0.44	0.03	0.41	0.02	1.00	0.26	0.05
No Authenticity	0.32	0.13	0.31	0.12	0.00	0.44	0.11
No Seriousness	0.37	1.00	0.42	1*	0.14	0.43	1.00
High Sensitivity	0.03	0.10	0.04	0.10	0.01	0.03	0.10
Anti-Intellectualism	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.02
Eclecticism	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.00	0.05	0.01
Ancient Practices	0.13	0.00	0.12	0.00	0.01	0.17	0.00
BIC	-2920 (-2939)		-2928 (-2934)		-2930/-2956 (-2983)		
ΔBIC	119 (138)		8 (-4)		2/28 (49)		

Table 6-3 Two and Three Latent Class Models for Framing of New Age in Print Media[349]

developed above. Items 1 and 2 have been hypothesized to belong exclusively to the cult frame, items 3 and 4 are supposed to be present with either cult or New Age proper frame, items 5 through 7 are considered exclusive indicators for the New Age proper frame and the remaining four items were to represent the yin-and-yang frame. As I have contended that the yin-and-yang frame is severely underrepresented in the news media, we should expect that the class that will represent this frame should be very small or even non-existent.

Initial tests revealed that item 10 ("networks") needed to be dropped, since its low frequency had produced too many (almost) zero eigenvalues in the tested models. The remainder of the items in essence support the claims made in the previous three sections. The results of the latent class analysis are summarized in Table 6-3.

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[349] Values in parentheses for BIC reflect *a posteriori* introductions of parameter restrictions on those conditional probabilities, for which boundary values, i.e. unity or zero, have been estimated. Although it is customary to "recuperate" degrees of freedom in such manner (Reynolds 1977: 160-162), I consider such proceeding positivist and thus not permissible. ΔBIC values show the BIC differential to the next parsimonious model displayed to the left in the table. The unrestricted two class model has been compared to a one class model. reflecting independence between all items The unrestricted four class model yields negative BIC differentials in comparison with all three presented models. BIC has been computed using the formula

For readers unfamiliar with latent class analysis, let me briefly outline how to read the presented figures. The first data row indicates the class probabilities, that is the probability that a random observation will be assigned to a specific class. As can been seen, all three presented models suggest that cult and New Age proper frame are invoked roughly equally frequently (all estimated class probabilities lie within the interval $p \in [.4, .6]$), while the third class in the three class model is considerably smaller. A look at the estimated conditional probabilities of this third class unfortunately shows, that this class has little affinity with the yin-and-yang frame I have described above. Instead, the third class is distinguished by the fact that all of its elements contain the "business aspect" framing device, which is indicated by the unity score in the column for the provisionally termed business frame at the business aspect position. Basically, all other scores can be read analogously to standardized factor scores, with the difference that negative scores do not exist. So, for example, in all three models displayed in the table the likelihood that a "business aspect" framing device will be used as part of the cult frame is much higher than the likelihood will be used within the New Age proper frame. This finding that is somewhat at odds with my assertion that the profit motive is also used to show the superficiality of the New Age ideology, an observation I will discuss below. The final rows of the table finally displays the value for the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), a test statistic that provides — in particular for log-linear models such as latent class analysis — a more satisfactory measure for the empirical adequacy of a model than do traditional measures such as X^2 or the log likelihood ratio L^2.[350] BIC values smaller than -10 indicate very strong evidence in favor of a model. BIC unlike many other test statistics can be used to compare non-nested models (Raftery 1995: 134). BIC differentials larger than 2 weakly favor, BIC differentials larger than 10 strongly favor the model with the smaller BIC value.

A look at Table 6-3 thus immediately reveals that all three models do yield acceptable BIC values. What is more, both (not shown) four and one class models display a dramatic

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$$BIC = L_k^2 - df_k \ln N \text{ (Raftery 1995: 135)}.$$

An asterisk denotes an *a priori* restricted parameter. All L^2 and X^2 values for the three models are significant on the p<.01   level.

[350] Among the advantages of BIC is that it values parsimony and hence rejects unduly complex models that explain little variance. For an extensive review of the weaknesses and strength of BIC, consult Raftery (1995), Gelman & Rubin (1995), and Hauser (1995).

deterioration of the model fit (ΔBIC>100), which supports the thesis that the framing devices utilized in the analyzed articles can meaningfully be attributed to two, maximal three frames. Interestingly, a model with two two-dimensional latent variables fares even worse, a hint that the identified frames usually are not used within the same article.

As for the substantive content of the frames, most specifications made in the previous sections seem to mirror empirical reality reasonably well. Items 1 through 3 ("brainwashing," "charismatic leader," "business aspect") are significantly overrepresented in the class that represents the cult frame, as are items 5 and 6 ("no seriousness," "high sensitivity") in the New Age proper frame class. The brainwashing and charismatic leader items, which starkly contradict the non-seriousness of the New Age proper frame, can even be restricted *a priori* to zero correlation with this frame without a noteworthy concomitant erosion of the model fit (restricted two-class model). That the *no authenticity* item is likely to be present in both New Age proper and cult frame equally is in line with my hypothesis. Somewhat more difficult is the interpretation of the role of those items that were supposed to represent the yin-and-yang frame. The eclecticism and ancient practices items in fact can be found in both two and three class model primarily in the cult frame class. While their overrepresentation in the two class model could be explained away with the model design that would conflate the two smaller classes of the "correct" three class model into one class in the two class model, the fact that the introduction of a third class does not shift the cases that have generated the disproportionally high scores into that additional class, suggests that they do not represent an independent third frame.

Before we further interpret the figures of these two items, though let us have a closer look at the new third class. The only item it heavily "loads" on is the business aspect item, with some disproportionally small non-zero values at the frequent no seriousness item and the ancient practices and high sensitivity items. As the business item is relatively frequent, I suspect that the new group constitutes a methodological artifact. It simply contains those articles that allude to New Age's business aspect and only implicitly (or not measured through my nine items) invoke cult or New Age proper frame.[351] The fact that the BIC

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[351] While the implicit content of news is difficult to measure, it certainly is of great importance (van Dijk 1991: 113).

differential of two for the unrestricted model does not strongly support the three class model further facilitates my decision to prefer the two class model.[352]

Sources

Cult and New Age proper frame thus dominate the discourse on New Age in the media. The question now becomes, why that is the case. Key to the understanding of media framings of New Age is journalists' unfamiliarity with the movement. Even Peter Steinfels, who covers religion for the *New York Times* and himself is an outspoken critic of the media ignorance towards religion (Hicks 1999), frankly admits his unfamiliarity with New Age. At the heyday of New Age, he writes in a book review of fundamentalist Christian critique of New Age:

> "[T]he authors do introduce a reader like myself to New Age thinkers and groups that influence millions but are largely unknown to elite culture."[353]

After a decade of the voluminous activities of New Age, the religion reporter of a prestigious paper is still so unfamiliar with New Age, he relies on fundamentalist Christians, themselves not highly esteemed in the eyes of journalists, for an overview on New Age. Compare this disinterest to the investigative journalism with which *New York Times* reporter Fred Powledge covered the nascent civil rights movement. In March 1965, Powledge went "lobbying to get the assignment for an personal investigation of the then hardly known, small organization called *Students for a Democratic Society*" (Gitlin 1980: 37). Admittedly, Powledge was a self-described "newsroom deviant" (*ibid.*, p. 38), but his enthusiasm for covering the group was matched by an interest of the editor establishment, because according to Powledge,

> "… are white and upper-middle-class and consider themselves intellectuals; some of t h e i r offspring were running around yelling 'Fuck' and threatening to change the world, and this got to the editors of *The Times* a lot more than did the actions (and the assassinations) of any number of illiterate black Southerners." (*ibid.*, p. 37, emphasis in the original)

In contrast to the social closeness of the student activists to journalists, who share the new middle class background, New Age appeals to and originates in semi-educated middle America. Such distance in general hampers the diffusion of news (Strang & Soule 1998:

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[352] To be fair, an *a posteriori* restriction of those boundary estimates that seem well in line with my theoretical propositions would improve the three class advantage to a respectable 28, but for the interpretative reasons stated above I would still stick with the two class model.

[353] Steinfels, Peter: "Idolatries of the 1980ies," *New York Times*, April 17, 1988, p. 7/28.

272). This situation is aggravated by the fact that New Age — unlike civil rights activists and their foes, who delivered genuine hard news pegs with the above mentioned assassinations — failed to create newsworthy events. Thus, journalists neither come into contact with New Age in their everyday life, nor do they have an incentive to investigate the movement because of an interest or involvement of their clientele in New Age.[354]

The resulting ignorance about the empirical reality of New Age explains why journalists frequently rely on cult and New Age proper frame in their discussion on New Age. As an inspection of New Age's empirical reality is expendable, narrative vitality trumps empirical credibility in this case. On the count of narrative vitality, the cult frame scores high. It contains the well established villain/victim scheme of news, hence events that fit this frame are desirable to news reporters and are usually deemed newsworthy. As with most cases of deviance, the press does not even need to undertake costly investigations, since police or courts make the press aware of such incidences. The *Heaven's Gate* case was first transmitted through police reports, so was Jessica Dubroff's plane crash. Elizabeth Clare Prophet's court hearings brought her organization into the limelight. All these cases would hardly qualify as New Age from an internal movement perspective. Yet, as there does not exist a clear-cut image of New Age in public discourse, a referral of an movement outsider to New Age suffices for many reporters to use the catch phrase in their articles. In short,

> *Observation 6-10*: Police and Courts are the primary sources for those articles on New Age that employ the cult frame.

> *Observation 6-11*: If an event can be framed by the cult frame, chances are, it will be framed by this frame.

> *Observation 6-12*: References by outsiders to New Age or anti-cult movement activist suffice to associate New Age with phenomena that lend themselves to the cult frame, regardless of the empirical adequacy of such associations.

Thus, because New Agers fail to offer themselves successfully as sources, the "default" news sources function as prime informants for most stories on New Age as a cult.

Stories that employ the New Age proper frame are not based in police or wire service reports, but usually are the product of some investigative journalistic work of local reporters, or, are simply music, theatre, movie or book reviews. Sources for articles of the latter type usually involve sources within the relevant industries, while the former rely on, albeit often

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[354] In fact, their might even exist some disincentives to study New Age, as some advertising clients, among

singular, movement sources. As I have noted above, industry professionals are usually more dedicated to their respective industries than to the New Age movement, to which they cater. As the unprofessionality image of New Age is often at odds with the ethos of professionalism dominant in these industries, we cannot expect New Age professionals to correct that image actively, because such proceeding might jeopardize their professional identities.

As the movement does not actively influence its media framings, the standpoint of a single group or person within the movement can be presented as the standpoint of the entire movement, even though this way some flagrant contradictions in the newspaper image of New Age develop over time. Because there are no intra-movement actors who efficiently rebut frames that violate the empirical reality of New Age, New Age has become very vulnerable to these framings, as controversial frames are only adopted in they media, if they are backed by elite advocates (Tuchman 1991: 88). In turn, the movement appears as incoherent actor that is incapable of establishing meaningful, "authentic" goals, a severe impediment for collective action proper.

Differences Across Nation States

Recall now the differences in framing between the German and US polities. The German polity is far more proactive than its American counterparts and has adopted many frames from the anti-cult movement. As it is generally assumed that state officials shape newspaper recording substantially, one would expect that the German and Swiss papers in my sample would recur far more frequently to framing devices of the cult frame. However, that is not the case. The sample $\tau_b \approx .02$ for the correlation between country origin of a newspaper and the presence of cult frame devices is not significantly different from zero. Thus, state rhetorics have had little influence on the choice of framing of New Age in the papers. To be sure, some variations across the two states exist. Specifically, the framing device of anti-intellectualism of New Age ($\tau_b \approx .12$, $p(X^2) < .01$) was far more frequently used in germanophone papers than in their US counterparts. Conversely, the claim that New Age recurs to long-established practices and hence is not really "new" was more frequently made in the US papers ($\tau_b \approx .05$, $p(X^2) < .1$). Most notably, openly negative judgment of New Age as deceiving or even dangerous occur far more frequently east of the Atlantic and the few instances of approving

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them, e.g., Procter and Gamble, refuse to advertise in papers that report on the occult (Gamson et al. 1992: 378).

articles about New Age appear almost exclusively in US papers. Categorizing the explicit judgment of New Age in all articles into a scale that ranges from "beneficial" over "positive," "neutral," and "negative" to "dangerous," produces a sample correlation of $\tau_b \approx .08$ with a X^2 of about 11 ($p<.01$). Hence, it seems that media criticisms have become more outspoken with statist backing of these criticism. Altogether, however, results across states vary surprisingly little.

One of the reasons for the symmetry of the results might be that the both fundamentalist Christians and the secular anti-cult movement are far better organized and vocal in the US than in Germany. Thus, there might exist a suppression effect in the seeming lack of influence of the state onto media framings. The overall negative reception of New Age in the media might have been facilitated in the US by the anti-cult movement, while in Germany this role has been occupied by the state.[355] Even if this is true, though, it still remains true that media framings are not closely tied to state framings. Instead, it seems that the prevalence of the cult and New Age proper frames in the media are best explained by cultural resonances. The cult frame simply evokes a villain/victim masterframe, which is all too familiar to audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. The New Age proper frame, on the other hand, can be considered part of the *progress through technology* frame, on which New Age allegedly scores low, just as it does in with regard to authenticity, a framing element of the ethno-nationalism theme. Even the differences between the countries can more easily be explained by higher cultural resonances than reliance on state information. The German language publications target higher educated audiences than the US papers in question. It is then unsurprising that the New Age's alleged lack of intellectualism is less frequently evoked in the latter. In summary, the data support:

> *Conjecture 6-6*: In Western democracies, the frequency of the application of a media frame depends more on the cultural resonances of the frame influence than on the adoption or rejection of the frame within a polity.

Is this good news for emerging movements? It is, but only for those incipient movements that are able to modify well resonating frames that include collective action frames. These are movements that successfully recruit and bind individuals which are experienced in the keying of masterframes. Some of the masterframes are, of course, easier bridged by persons which

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[355] This is a special case of Rucht's (1996: 200) thesis that the state can make countermovements superfluous.

own the right amount and type of embodied and institutionalized cultural capital. Frames based in the *progress through technology* masterframes, for instance, are most effectively keyed by academics and professionals, because their occupation is associated with technology. Ethno-nationalist framings, are most effectively keyed by persons that are considered to be of the ethnicity in question. Native Americans, for instance, can more convincingly key Native American frames than New Agers, regardless of the actual familiarity with Native American traditions. Intellectuals, which are the prime movers in the construction of nationalities are usually more familiar in the keying of nationalist frames. They are also advantaged in the construction of nationalist frames, because the construction of historicity which is central in the construction of primordiality is considered the *métier* of academics. The liberal individualism masterframe — while principally being universalist — is also most frequently applied by intellectuals. New Age's claim to individual transformation combines elements of the *harmony with nature* theme with the *self reliance* (Gamson 1992b: 140) rooted in liberal individualism. Unfortunately, New Agers are not well equipped to embody either frame. They cannot, like many indigenous people could, claim a special relation to nature, nor are they economically outstandingly successful to symbolize the self-reliance theme convincingly.

People are not only differently suited to embody certain frames, they are differently equipped to diffuse newly keyed frames. Emerging movements benefit from dedicated participation of individuals that, preferably through personal ties, have access to the press as incipient movements do not lie on any news beat. New Age members usually are not closely associated with the media.

With respect to the class bases of social movements, the new middle class participants of the new social movements are thus triply advantaged. They are experienced in the keying of masterframes, they can convincingly embody several masterframes, and they have close ties to the media. New Age is a different case. Its participants do not enjoy special symbolic relationships to masterframes, and they do not influence the media discourses. In turn, New Age remained over time a mass behavior identity.

New Age: A Mass Behavior Identity

"There are three elements of media coverage of particular interest top movement actors: (1) standing, that is, the extent to which the group is taken seriously by being given extensive media coverage, regardless of content; (2) preferred framing, that is,

the prominence of the group's frames in media discourse on the issues of concern; and (3) movement sympathy, that is, the extent to which the content of the coverage presents the group in a way that is likely to gain sympathy from relevant publics." (Gamson & Wolfsfeld 1993: 121)

New Age fails on all three counts: It is not taken seriously, its framings are irrelevant to the media, and hardly any new membership, in particular not valuable new middle class members will be attracted to New Age through media framings. As a consequence, the discourses through which New Age identity is constructed are not suited to trigger collective action. However, they are favorable — or at least not averse — to the reproduction of mass behavior. While external framings of New Age might not contribute to collective action mobilizations, they also do not hamper the reproduction of New Age mass behavior. The lack of coherence in the intra-movement discourse enables persons with widely varying ideologies to integrate New Age beliefs and practices into their everyday routines without being forced to alter the latter too much. Under different circumstances, the proliferation of practices might have led to a fragmentation of the corresponding identity itself, but in the case of New Age the enduring framing of New Age as an entity by movement outsiders compensates for the internal fragmentation.

The Failure to Generate Collective Action

Yet, New Age identity discourses are not suited to launch collective action. Voices within the movement are far too incoherent to generate an *esprit de corps*. Most rhetorics that are concerned with action target the mind, not the self in Mead's ([1934] 1967) terminology. That is, New Age as a collective actor does surface neither in anti-cult movement, nor state, nor media, nor even New Age int1tra-movement discourse.

   At worst — according to the anti-cult movement, cult, and New Age proper frames — a single person supposedly seduces a unemancipated mass to perform u n i f o r m b e h a v i o r . At best — according to the internal movement frame — a large number of people a c t   a l i k e ,   b u t   i n   a n   u n c o o r d i n a t e d   m a n n e r . Somewhere inbetween those two poles, New Age is simply viewed as an i m p e r s o n a l f o r c e ; that is the case for the media's yin-and-yang frame and movement-internal framings. Thus, c o l l e c t i v e action does not figure in any of the existing frames for New Age, and behavior is far more common than is action.

As disparate the different framings of New Age are, they all lack important stimuli for collective action. Specifically, all framings

- − position the potential attainment of New Age goals into the indefinite future, and presume incremental change,
- − and do not address inter-individual cooperation.

Most framings of New Age disseminate a lack of urgency. This perception hampers the evolvement of any action, be it collective or individual, since objectives whose potential attainment is not placed in the immediate future become discounted (e.g.,Dawes 1988). In internal movement framings, the lack of urgency is transported through the millennial notion that a transformation of society will take place regardless of individual actions, simply as time passes by. Additionally, the temporal framework, which places New Age within ancient traditions of Buddhism, paganism, Christianity, *etc.*, does mot seem to necessitate, or even warrant, immediate action. Likewise, the notion of a gradual shift towards the new age connotes passivity. But not only internal movement frames transport the image of New Age's mellowness. Those media framings that do not devalue the goals of New Age through the use of the cult frame (and thereby impede collective action for a different reason), do likewise. These media frames, which employ the New Age proper frame, amplify the image of lacking urgency through the categorization of New Age as soft news, which brands actions in the framework of New Age as inconsequential.

But it is not only hard to find a rationale for action in New Age framings, it is even more difficult to discern any potential collective actor. In internal framings, New Age's goals are set on the individual level and thus require individual but not collective action. The anti-cult movement's and media's cult frames and most stories employing New Age proper and cult frames feature only protagonists that act individually and independent of one another. There are authoritarian cult leaders or entrepreneurs, who induce some collective behavior in a docile New Age rank-and-file. Additionally, most of the goals that are presented in cult and New Age proper frame are less than desirable, and thus are not suited to induce any collective action. And even the rarely found yin-and-yang frame, which does contain some positively valued goals, usually does not refer to any collective actor, as it mostly employs the metaphor of New Age as an impersonal force.

As collective action is basically absent from all New Age frames, frame keying would be necessary to render New Age frames compatible with collective action. However, those

persons that are most experienced in changing the perception of New Age, i.e., new middle class professionals, are unlikely to endeavor that task. Most of these cultural workers are repelled by the image of unprofessionality of New Age, as it is purported in the New Age proper frame. The latter is the dominant media frame and, thus, also likely the most often adopted frame by new middle class members, which usually encounter New Age only indirectly via the mass media. The few professionals, who found their ways into New Age are unlikely to render the internal New Age framing for two reasons. First, their allegiance to their professional organizations is routinely higher than their loyalty to New Age organizations, as the latter dispense far fewer and less valuable selective incentives than the former. As the individual identities of New Agers and professionals are often incompatible, it is thus likely that many professionals will in the long run disassociate themselves from the New Age movement. Secondly, for the few persons which as New Age entrepreneurs command over a high cultural capital there is no reason to shift the internal movement identity towards collective action. These entrepreneurs depend on the rank-and-file as customers. That means, a high amount of uniformity among the rank-and-file b e h a v i o r ensures them of a stable customer base that requires little amount of product diversification. To the contrary, an activist movement paradigm would heighten the possibility of additional competition, as the dominant organizational form of New Age organizations is the private business. What is more, the organization of New Age as a market also means that New Age must adopt a universalist identity to ensure an as large potential customer base as possible. However, universalist identities are inferior to the more exclusionary primordialist and identities in terms of their collective action potential, as will be discussed at some length in the in the following chapter. In sum, New Age is an identity adverse to collective action. Chances that this property of New Age framings will change are dim.

The Persistence of Mass Behavior

In contrast to the incapability of New Age identity's to bring about a sizable amount of collective action, it does sustain mass behavior, which remains rather uniform over time. However, there are attempts to uncouple this behavior from the New Age tag. Ironically, these attempts originate largely from within the movement. In contrast, there is hardly any change in the external conceptualization of New Age. In fact, it seems that external

movement definitions have contributed more to the survival of New Age identity than internal ones.

Although the *cult frame* and to a lesser extent the *New Age proper frame* delegitimize New Age, this is of little relevance for the behavior of the average New Ager, as external and internal framings of the movement diverge dramatically and show no signs of readjustment towards a consolidation of the external and internal frames. New Agers confronted with external framings will quickly question the empirical credibility of these frames, which they therefore can easily ignore. At worst, they do adopt media framings because of their ubiquity, but at the same time continue with their behavior under a different label, say, "*Esoterik*" (in Germany) or "spirituality" (in the US). The internal label for New Age may change, while practices, membership and even the external label stay the same. Such different identities inside and outside the movement can coexist, because these identities have been constructed separately and base on different principles. Media New Age framings are resonant in the majority of the population, since they have been keyed on enduring cultural themes. They do not resonate with New Age members, though, since they do not enjoy a high degree empirical credibility for persons which participate in the movement. Vice versa, New Age members have constructed their collective identity through similar experiences. However, their experiences are not communicable to the journalists reporting on New Age. Thus, the two different identity framings can easily coexist.[356]

One consequence of the divergence between internal and external framings of New Age, though, is that many New Agers distance themselves from the label New Age. In fact, in 73 (about 5%) of the articles in my sample, persons which were considered New Agers from the journalist's viewpoint expressly disassociated themselves from the movement. Even if these persons renounce the label New Age, they continue to employ the practices they have acquired as a New Ager. To the outside world this rejection of the New Age label appears as lack of commitment. The New Age proper frame adds to this image of apathy, a deterrent for potential members who would be interested in collective action. More importantly, though, the anti-intellectualism element of the frame makes it unattractive for easily cognitively liberated persons, that is the new middle class, to join.

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[356] For very different reasons the pre-1967 right-to-life movement also failed to synchronize of external and internal movement framings and consequently failed to trigger collective action proper; (Luker 1984: 127ff).

In short, the reproduction of the class basis of New Age is facilitated through the framing in the media. As I will become clear, though, for collective action to arise within the New Age proto-movement, a shift in its class basis seems indispensable.

7 FROM ORGANIZATION TO IDENTITY

In an attempt to alleviate the ideational bias of framing theory (Meyer 1999: 85), the mechanics between resources, organizational form and collective identity of a movement will be explored in this chapter. The main contentions put forth in this chapter are visualized in Figure 7-1. It is contended that the distribution of resources among the potential constituency of a movement shapes its organizational form, which in turn determines form and viability of its collective identity. Specifically, it will be shown that collective identities of movements that predominantly recruit persons who are short on social and institutionalized cultural capital have a propensity to rely on private enterprises as organizational vehicles. The organization into private businesses in turn favors universalist identity codes. In contrast, better equipped movements will develop a collective identity that is marked by
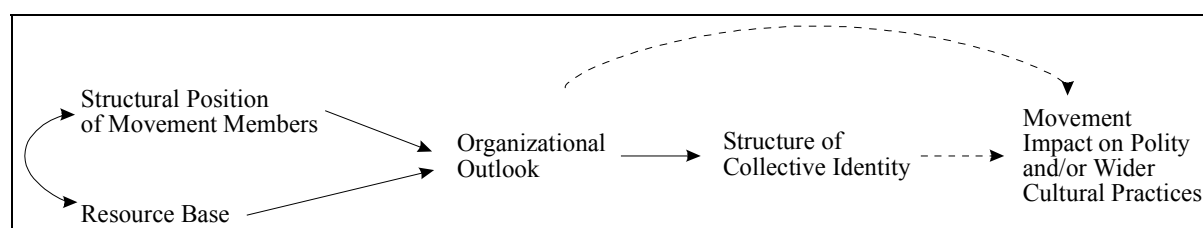

Figure 7-1 Core Model of the Relationship between Organization and Identity[357]

primordialization or quasi-primordialization. The latter collective identity types are not only more durable in the current societal context, but also facilitate the implementation of movement goals.

In what follows, the different organizational patterns of New Age and new social movement will be compared and connected to the resource basis of the (potential) constituency. Drawing on the typology of collective identities described in chapter 3.2.2, it will then be shown that an elective affinity between organizational and ideological elements of movements exist. Specifically, new social movements, which are mainly organized through non-profit voluntary associations, know fewer incentives for the construction of universalist codes than New Age with its rootedness in private enterprises does.

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[357] Dotted Paths are not elaborated in this chapter.

Organizational Fields: New Age vs. New Social Movements

Recall that political process theory suggests that movement success is brought about by a strong informal network among its constituents. This network supplants and translates into formal organizations, which are the backbone of movement efficacy. Although persons in the lower echelons of the social strata do normally command over dense networks, these persons lack both material resources and organizational skills to erect powerful organizational structures, which explains why there are virtually no poor people's movements without external benefactors (Cress & Snow 1996: 1104ff). The new social movements powered by the grassroots networks of the new middle class are the most successful contemporary movements, since they command over both strong informal networks, high cultural capital, and material resources.

In contrast, dense networks among New Agers are conspicuously absent.[358] The underdevelopment of networks does not only apply to New Age individuals, but holds true with a vengeance for New Age organizations. The present section aims to underscore the organizational proliferation of New Age with empirical data and explain it in terms of the institutional environment. The main theses are:

> *Conjecture 7-1*: Movements whose organizational bases are primarily for-profit enterprises find it more difficult to establish dense networks than do movements rooted in voluntary associations.

> *Conjecture 7-2*: If a movement develops a wealth of capitalist enterprises or relies mainly on voluntary associations as mobilization vehicles, depends on the institutional environment potential movement participants face.

> *Conjecture 7-3:* The institutional environment that confronts potential participants depends on the latter's class position in Bourdieuian terms.

In how far are these conjectures reflected in New Age?

New Age: Business Organizations

Combining the above conjectures, the following corollaries for the empirical case of New Age can be obtained:

> *Corollary 7-1*: The proliferation of New Age is due to the for-profit character of New Age organizations.

> *Corollary 7-2*: The institutional environment New Age faces is not conducive to the construction of voluntary associations.

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[358] See also chapter 8.

Corollary 7-3: The low middle class position of the New Age constituency channels New Age movement entrepreneurs into petty capitalist position.

To establish the validity of these propositions, it will first be documented that New Age is indeed a highly proliferated industry (*Corollary 7-1*). Next, it will be shown that by using standard economic theory, the proliferation of the social movement industry of New Age can be explained in terms of the low middle class origin of most New Agers (*Corollary 7-3*). Finally, a comparison with the new social movement industry will show, how the institutional environment of New Age was more adverse to the emergence of voluntary associations than was the new social movement environment (*Corollary 7-2*).

Degree of Proliferation

Most New Age organizations are not run by movement members in their spare time, but rather by movement entrepreneurs in the literal sense. Many of these entrepreneurs do share several movement goals, but a closer association among these them is hampered by their relationship as economic competitors. This situation is aggravated by the fact that most New Age businesses are small family businesses, whose owners depend financially on the business success of their enterprises. Thus, most New Age entrepreneurs are "unaffiliated upstarts" (Riordan 1992: 111).[359] Indeed, the most salient feature of the New Age is:

Observation 7-1: The New Age market is unusually proliferated given its size.

The U.S. *New Age Yellow Pages* (Ingenito 1992) list about 40,000 organizations, most of which are capitalist enterprises that maintain only few ties because of their relationship as economic competitors. In my sample of New Age enterprises, only one in fifty New Age establishments employed more than ten persons, and none did have more than fifty employees, nor were there any franchises that would have attained a size of more than twenty employees. These figures are well below the respective figures for the entire retail market, where roughly one third of all year-round establishments are larger than ten employees and more than one out of twenty exceed the 50 employee threshold. For book retailers, an industry similar in volume and product scope, the figures are 22 percent and one percent, respectively.[360] As I surveyed the market in Southern California, where the concentration and

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[359] The quote refers to New Age channelers in particular, but does apply to the whole New Age field..

[360] 1992 figures, source: U.S. Department of Commerce (1995: 1-31, 1-49).

absolute number of New Agers is unusually high and, thus, advantageous for larger businesses, it is unlikely that my sample underestimated market fragmentation.

The New Age market is also not so small that it would only allow for niche establishments. In 1990, US-Americans spent an estimated four billion US-Dollars per year on New Age training seminars only (Rupert 1992: 128), a market volume that is close to the retailing market for motor cycles and about half the volume traded in book stores.[361] Between 1992 and 1995, New Age annual book sales rose from 5.6 to 9.7 million volumes.[362] No overall figures for the New Age retail market exist, but we can safely assume the market for New Age merchandise and services other than training seminars (clairvoyance, New Age medicine, *etc*.) adds substantially to the sales volumes of training seminars.

My fieldwork revealed that in San Diego County only 21 of the initially obtained 34 (62%) New Age outlets were still in business in August of the same year the Yellow Pages were released. Most of the close-downs had happened in the less affluent Eastern and Southern cities of El Cajon, La Mesa and Chula Vista, while the coastal communities of La Jolla, Del Mar and Encinitas held on to a comparably high density of New Age stores, which suggests that New Age dies not fare well in the working class and ethnic minorities, which are concentrated in the former neighborhoods. In Sedona, a New Age resort that attracts New Age visitors because of the presumed existence of magnetic vortices in its surroundings, the survival numbers were considerably higher with only one out of an initial 12 (8%) establishments having exited from the market at the time of the survey.[363] At the same time, an inspection of the town's three main business streets turned up two additional New Age stores not yet listed in the phone book. In Dane County the survival rate lay at seven out of nine over the observed year. Of all remaining 54 stores, only two businesses maintained more than a single outlet.[364]

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[361] 1992 figures, source: *op. cit.* (*supra nota* 360), pp. 1-39, 1-49.

[362] Anonymous: "Sekten-Experten nennen die USA einen spiritistischen Marktplatz," *Der Standard*, April 1, 1997, p. 4 (<http://193.154.165.41/archiv/19970401/24.htm>, February 9, 2000).

[363] The difference is significant on the .05 level according to the one-tailed student's t-test.

[364] The *Psychic Eye Bookshop*, which interestingly was in 1995 still called *Psychic Eye N e w A g e Bookstore,* has franchsied 13 stores in the Western USA (http://www.psychiceyebookshops.com/locations/Locations.htm, May 1, 2000), while the *Lighthouse New Age Bookstore* operated in 1997 three branches in La Jolla; CA, Scottsdale, AZ and Santa Fe, NM, respectively.

Conditions for the Proliferated Market

What are the reasons for the stark fragmentation of the New Age retail market? Standard microeconomic theories suggest that markets tend to favor the establishment of dominant firms in an industry (Encaouca, Geroski & Jacquemin 1986; Sutton 1991: 15).[365] The retail market for books, on which *inter alia* some New Age merchandise is traded, can serve as an example for the usual development towards high market concentration. Chains such as *Crown's* and *Barnes and Nobles* dominate the US retail market for books.[366] The reasons for the survival of s o m e small independent booksellers in these markets lie either on the demand side of market dynamics or are rooted in the institutional setup of the market. For instance, the German retail market for books is highly atomized because of its price regulation mechanism; most new books are bought and sold at a fixed priced determined by the publisher. This institutional setup prevents large booksellers from taking advantage of their favorable cost structure, that would allow them to undercut current market prices and thereby attract customers from smaller competitors, which ultimately would drive the latter out of the market. As a result, in Germany book market displays a low degree of concentration (Henning 1998: 161; Preuß Neudorf 1999: 156; Thomalla 1997: 95). On the other side of the Atlantic we find a demand side mechanism that keeps some small bookstores in business. For instance, small communal bookstores carrying leftist agendas survive, since their customers prefer not to buy in chain stores they consider symbols of malign capitalism. These customers consider a highly atomized market a good in itself and evaluate their purchase transaction at small stores themselves positively. Here differentials in the convenience and price with respect to larger stores are outweighed by customer preference for fragmented markets.[367]

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[365] Recent theorizing that has suggested a reduction of the pressure for market concentration due to heightened inter-firm cooperation made possible through new information technologies (Castells 1997: 160ff) does not apply here, since the existence of dense inter-firm networks Castells presupposes does not apply to New Age businesses.

[366] In 1992, the four largest firms conducted more than 40% of all book sales (*ibid*., p. 1-137).

[367] The free-rider-problem in this example is overcome through the assignment of a positive utility value to i n d i v i d u a l purchase process.

Overall, however, the survival of v e r y small,[368] especially family-operated businesses, which are at the core of the New Age market, is tenuous. Instead, most contemporary retail markets contain large companies or franchises. Several factors facilitating a persistence of family-based enterprises outside developing countries and the agrarian sector, where family businesses do prevail (Dannhaeuser 1993: Endnote 1, p. 322; Pollak 1985: 591), have been suggested. Among facilitating circumstances are dense social networks, "the need for personalized means to ensure trust, low opportunity costs, diseconomies of scale, the presence of ethnic plurality" (Dannhaeuser 1993: 307). The institutional setup — such as the existence of strong supra-firm buying cooperatives and institutionalized career trajectories favoring petty craftsmanship — might also mitigate the position of family-operated firms (*ibid., passim*). More general, the lower competition in an industry is, the more likely small businesses are dominating that industry (Sutton 1991: 308). It will be shown that in line with argument on the positive relationship between firm size and "entrepreneurial ability" (Gitlin [1995] 1996), low competition in the New Age market is mainly due to the managerial inability of most New Age entrepreneurs. Let me, though first, pursue other possible explanations for market fragmentation.

Potential intra-firm *monitoring* and resulting *loyalty problems*, which are seen at the root of family business success in the transaction cost approach (Pollak 1985: 585f, 592f), are unlikely to affect the New Age market any more than most other retail sale outlets. Nor does New Age command over dense social networks that would reduce the pressure for firm integration through an increase of inter-firm loyalty (Granovetter 1985: 507).

Likewise, *institutional explanations* are unconvincing in the explanation of New Age market fragmentation. The market for New Age goods and services is neither more nor differently regulated than many other retail markets, nor do all or even most New Agers seem to have a strong inherent preference for an atomized market. Otherwise, New Age sections in new book chain stores would not flourish the way they do. The reasons for the fragmented market structure instead seem to lie on the supply side.

As the New Age stores I visited were strikingly similar in both physical setup and product range, one would expect that New Age enterprises would benefit economics of scale, which

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[368] Even a scholar who convincingly argues that "small is bountiful" concedes that "the proportion of the workforce in very small (under 20 [employees]) establishments has declined strongly since 1939, but there has been little change in the proportion in stores with less than 100 employees" (Granovetter 1984: 326).

have led to the dominance of large cooperations and franchises in most industries (Chandler 1990). Of the factors characterizing so-called *diseconomics of scale*, i.e. inferior data processing and transportation technologies, poor customers, and limited managerial skills (Dannhaeuser 1993: 308), only lack of cultural capital, read: entrepreneurial skills and experiences, applies in the case of New Age. The overwhelming majority (87%) of New Age business owners in my sample did not have any formal training in management techniques. Not only are New Age entrepreneurs unfamiliar with business techniques, but, vice versa, academically trained economists and businesspersons are ignorant of the New Age market. There exists virtually no scientific economic literature on the subject. An inspection on the *Econlit* database — the largest database for economic literature — uncovers only six entries on New Age, all by the same author, and none of them investigating the profit potential of the New Age in even the broadest sense.[369] Professional mangers in all likelihood will also not become acquainted with New Age through their peers, as these peers usually are located in upper middle class circles disinterested in New Age, a low middle class phenomenon. Even if they are familiar with New Age, though, they are probably deterred from entering the market, since the aloofness image of New Age is difficult to reconcile with the rational choice practices most economists embrace.

The lack of managerial skills also suggests that entrepreneurs and employees of New Age businesses face *low opportunity costs* with respect to their employment, a second favorable condition for small businesses (Dannhaeuser 1993: 308). As many alternative occupational career paths are sealed for New Agers with little vocational training, the New Age store might become the only viable options for employment.

In fact, the applicability of the last two established conjectures on market fragmentation in conjunction with the observation that of the store owners and employees that responded to my question after their formal educational background none carried an MBA and only 3% (*n*=67) held an academic degree past the four-year college degree — seems to warrant the tentative approval of the following conjectures.

> *Observation 7-2*: New Age entrepreneurs and employees in general command over little cultural capital in the form of vocational training beyond college level.

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[369] The six articles are written by Laurence Iannaccone, who is interested in the religious economy of cults and sects.

Observation 7-3: New Age entrepreneurs and employees are inexperienced in the utilization of symbolic capital of the cultural elites.

Admittedly, the empirical evidence on these theses is not conclusive. Some well informed scholars have asserted a middle class origin of New Agers (Bromley 1997: 127; Knoblauch 1989: 517), but actual empirical data on New Age's class origin are rare. The few existing data usually focus on relatively well organized groups within the larger New Age movement. One study of a Sri Chimnoy group shows a overproportional recruitment of persons involved in technical and support occupations (Gussner & Berkowitz 1988: 154), a finding that is also supported by a study on *silva mind control* (Paterline & Heishman 1998). These figures hint at a low middle class basis for New Age. There are also some data that suggest that New Agers command over more institutionalized cultural capital. An estimated 41% of new religious movement adherents and 50% of the New Age leaning (Kosmin & Lachman 1993: 154; Lee 1995) Christian denomination Unitarian-Universalist hold a college degree (Kosmin & Lachman 1993: Table 7-1A, p. 258), well above the average US college graduation rate of about 21%. Several interpretative caveats plague these statistics, though. First, new religious movements and Unitarian Universalists are defective proxies for New Age. The set of new religious movement is far too heterogeneous to adequately capture the characteristics of any single new religious movement. And, Unitarian Universalists might be sympathetic to ideological elements found in New Age, but just like with the traditional occult, an ideological affinity does not necessarily translate into an organizational affiliation with New Age. If these larger groups do not fittingly describe New Age, the number of straightforwardly self-declared New Agers in the Kosmin and Lachman sample, is far too small ($n=12$) to draw any reasonable statistical inferences, even if the issue of the validity of the sample with respect to the New Age population is disregarded.[370] What is more, college graduation rates themselves are a poor indicator for the social position of the New Age adherent. As for any cult, which *per definitionem* manufactures new cultural symbols, s o m e cultural capital is required from its adherents (Stark 1986: 218). An ideology which like New Age appeals often to symbols of science as source for legitimation is also unlikely to prosper in environments such as urban ghettos, rural communities, or even fundamentalist

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[370] The survey was intended to tap the religion , while many New Agers do not consider New Age a religion, but a world view. Also, as has been elaborated above, many New Agers are hesitant to state their New Age affiliation or outright deny it.

Christian environments, where a cultural capital very different in substance is currency. Some rudimentary college education therefore facilitates New Age recruitment. But New Agers rarely have attended prestigious universities, nor do they go on to Master's or Ph.D. degrees — at least not in institutions outside the New Age movement. Most New Age entrepreneurs which held a bachelor degree in my California sample, then, received that degree from an institution of the second-tier California State system or earned a degree from an institution that lingers at the fringe of the New Age movement itself. These institutions, some but not all of which are accredited colleges, offer courses specifically geared to a New Age clientele. Degree programs such as "interdisciplinary consciousness studies" — offered at the Graduate School for Holistic Studies of John F. Kennedy University in San Francisco, California — or "holistic studies" — offered at the NCA accredited Vermont College of Norwich University in Montpelier, Vermont[371] — might very well f o r m a l l y satisfy the college degree criterion. However, substantially they confer little cultural capital that counts outside the New Age movement. Thus, global measures of college graduation rates seriously overestimate the educational attainment of the average New Ager.

In turn, the rudimentary empirical evidence from my sample combined with the observations on the intra New Age discourse, which — as has been elaborated in chapter 5 — relies heavily on scientific symbols, but has little academic substance, and the market fragmentation, which also favors the thesis of the shortage of institutionalized cultural capital within the New Age community, seems to validate conjectures 7-2 and 7-3.

Triggered by the image of New Age as appealing towards individuals outside established career paths, cultural barriers for the entrance of persons well educated in management and marketing techniques into the New Age industry have arisen. In fact, if one divorces *ethnic pluralism* thesis in the explanation of family business persistence from its essentialist baggage and modifies it into a more culturalist model, one can — up to certain limits — find parallels between the situation of family businesses of ethnic minorities and New Agers. Two main factors for ethnic economies, such as the Vietnamese petty businesses in the US, have been suggested. These are effects of sojourning and host hostility (Bonacich 1973). Sojourning is seen as a major influence of ethnic minorities to become petty businesspersons

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[371] Both these colleges are among the 45 "learning institutions" listed in the 1996 *New Age Journal's Sourcebook*.

(*ibid.*, pp. 584ff). The most important element of sojourning is the expected temporality of minority occupations. Ethnic guest workers often intend to return to their home countries and orient their actions around this goal. Thus, they emphasize saving while avoiding accumulation of immovable assets. This orientation equips them well for the so-called "middlemen" groups, the largest in numbers of which are retailers. Adding to the compatibility of the goals of ethnic minorities, is often a so-called "host hostility" (*ibid.*, p. 589ff), which restricts the occupation alternatives for the middlemen minority (*ibid.*, p. 592). New Age entrepreneurs and employees are in a similar situation. As New Agers usually lack the capital, but not necessarily the will, for a traditional career outside the movement, they both view their career positions as temporary. Even if New Agers do not face "hostility" in the outside market, the demand for their skills is scanty outside New Age. What distinguishes ethnic middlemen economies from the New Age economy, is the strength of the self-identification with the ingroup and the reason for the exclusion from the regular labor market. Ethnic minority entrepreneurs and their environment consider their group identifications mostly as ascriptive, and by virtue of this ascription they are excluded from the outside labor market. New Agers and their environment consider the New Age affiliation choice and the exclusion from the regular labor market does not happen for reasons of group affiliation, but for lack of managerial skills. These important differences should, though, not conceal the above shown similarity of the logic of the reproduction of family business industries in both ethnic and New Age economies.

These patterns can even be illustrated with career trajectories of Deepak Chopra and Andrew Weil, who are probably New Age leaders closest to the academia. Recall from chapter 5.4.7. While both actually did receive a degree in a traditional academic field, namely medicine, they have not kept strong affiliations with academia. Rather both present their M.D. titles as symbol of their legitimacy, while at the same time they have chosen to depart the academic field and instead focused on their respective businesses.

New Social Movements: Institutionally Supported Volunteerism

Consider, on the other hand, Catherine MacKinnon and Adrienne Rich as media figures representing radical feminism. Much less publicized in media intended for general audiences, they are omnipresent in academic journals. Both hold high profile positions in academic field: MacKinnon, who has obtained a B.A. from Smith College, a J.D. from Yale Law

School, and a Ph.D. in political science from Yale University and held positions at UCLA, University of Chicago, Harvard, Yale and Stanford University, is professor for law at University of Michigan and co-editor of the Yale Law Journal.[372] Rich has received an abundant amount of academic awards and teaches at the University of Pennsylvania. Compare those Ivy league records to the appearances of Weil as guest lecturer at the University of Arizona[373] and the private *Chopra Center for Well Being* in La Jolla, California.

Those career differences between the prominent figures are not accidental. In particular at institutions for higher learning, a wealth of institutionalized opportunities for new social movement activists exists. At most American and an increasing number of European universities, they can — for better or for worse[374] — recur to departments for gender studies, gay and lesbian studies, and other issue oriented departments. Most "traditional" social science and humanity departments also deliver an encouraging environment. Since the sixties' heyday of (new) social movements, sociology has become increasingly permeated by activist scholars (Lipset 1994). Indeed, many university departments in the social sciences and humanities have proliferated along the lines of identity movements (Gitlin [1995] 1996: 126-165). These departments frequently bring together cognitively similarly predisposed persons for the first time, thus creating initial network ties. For example, one study well-documented study on radical feminism reveals that "women's liberation emerged in Columbus in the context of student movements at OSU (*Ohio State University*)" (Whittier 1995: 28). The listing of radical feminist organizations in Ohio's capitol consequently contains mainly university-affiliated groups (Whittier 1997: Fn. 4). Most of the ensuing women's movement organizations then were either direct affiliates of OSU or the *Women's Action Collective*, itself an offspring of consciousness-raising groups at OSU. Later at the women's studies program of OSU the political socialization of radical feminist activists was

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[372] Cf. MacKinnon's homepage at the University of Michigan, <http://www.law.umich.edu/faculty/mackinno.htm>, May 28, 1999.

[373] Kluger, Jeffrey with Alice Park: "Mr. Natural: Millions of Americans Swear by the Alternative Medicine of Dr. Andrew Weil - But Is Anybody Really Getting Better?," *Time*, May 12, 1997, p. 71.

[374] Note that the institutional backing of the university environment, which enables effective social movement mobilizations, comes at with a price tag. The price to pay are the fetters the highly institutionalized academe, financed after all by the state and mighty corporations, entail. It would be anomic, if this embeddedness would not render movement goals more conservative.

initiated.[375] It comes to no surprise then, that 33 of 34 interviewees from the radical women's movement held a B.A., while 32 had embarked on professional careers (Whittier 1995: 10). Similarly, Seidman (1993) convincingly traces the mutually dependent development between gay and lesbian studies and the respective movements. Likewise, "the sociology of peace and war is part of the peace movement" (Gamson 1990: 88). In short, since some decades ago "students with practical or reformist interests [have become] the basic audience and resource" (Turner & Turner 1990: 181) of academic sociology and related disciplines. That explains, why

> "education is by far the strongest correlate that I have discovered of civic engagement in all its forms, including social trust and membership in many different types of groups. In fact, the effects of education become greater and greater as we move up the educational ladder. The four years of education between 14 and 18 total years have ten times more impact on trust and membership than the first four years of formal education." (Putnam 1996)

The close association between universities and new social movements means that activists can gain valuable experiences benefiting the movement in an environment that is not directly related to movement success. To begin with, academic institutions that visibly employ movement leaders add legitimacy to the movement. Besides accumulating symbolic capital, university faculty aligned with the movement can also at least partially independent of immediate economic success augment the cultural capital of the movement by contributing to movement discourses in their academic writings. More importantly, though, university departments aligned along movement cleavages lay a fertile ground for new social movement networks. Gay or women's studies' seminars frequently bring together like minded persons for the first time, thereby creating initial network ties. What is more, the university environment usually includes meeting spaces, the most central tangible resource for emerging movements (Cress & Snow 1996). For student activists, colleges and universities also provide ample opportunity to acquire cultural resources crucial for future careers, be it in the professions or as prospective movement entrepreneurs. Movement failure would not affect the career aspirations of these student activists significantly, as skills acquired in movement activity are oftentimes just as valuable in the professions. The absence of market pressures

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[375] See Whittier's (1995: 6f) discussion of "typical" biographies of radical feminists in Columbus: In 1968, activism grew out of a association with the civil rights movement; in 1988 it was a women's studies course at OSU that triggered the initial involvement.

also facilitates coalitions among new social movement entrepreneurs, as they are in no direct competitive relationship.

Although gender or gay and lesbian studies are certainly not disguised movement organizations, these departments do deliver organizational underpinnings that facilitate the development of dense movement networks that exist in the case of the new social movements (Donati 1984: 843; Friedman & McAdam 1992: 158; Klandermans 1990: 131; Kriesi 1988: 53, Table 4, p.54; Schmitt 1990:117ff). The relative independence from the economic success of new social movement organizations is in stark contrast to the experiences of movement leaders in New Age. Neither New Age organizations nor representatives are rooted in academia, or for that matter in any other established institution that would be functionally equivalent to the college environment. At best, New Age utilizes the cultural symbols of the academy to gain legitimacy, but there is virtually no organizational overlapping. Almost the only "support" New Age derives from public institutions is the establishment of a market economy.

Impact of the Organizational Structure on Collective Identity

The differences in the social positioning of new social movement and New Age entrepreneurs translate into different goals of their social movement organizations. The most important goal of New Age organizations is recruitment, while specific instrumental goals can hardly be discerned. Continual recruitment, which secures customers, is necessary for the survival of these private businesses.[376] Following rational choice logic, most New Age businesses deliver private rather than collective goods to its clients. New Age's only truly collective good, its collective identity, is of symbolic nature, its provision has remained rudimentary. In contrast, new social movement volunteers work also towards collective goals.

As the previous section has shown, the differences in the types of goods is at least partly due to the social locations of the adherents. That the constituency of New Age and other new religious movements is less resourceful than the one of the new social movements has been widely acknowledged (Barker 1989: 14; Hess 1993: 5; Knoblauch 1989:517; Robbins 1988: 4,44; Schneider 1991:53; Stenger 1990:400; Turner [1983] 1991: 200). The implications of this difference for the organizational structure of the different movements has been discussed above. The organizational structures of a movement in turn affect its collective identity, not

only because as organizational identities constitute one layer of collective identity (Clemens 1996: 205; Gamson 1991; Rupp & Taylor 1999: 366-371), but also because there exist elective affinities between organizational forms and collective identity structures.

Recall Giesen and Eisenstadt's typology of collective identities introduced in chapter 3.2.2. Within their framework, New Age is characterized through a universalist identity, which contains traces of traditionalism. In comparison, new social movements have moved from an initial universalism to a strong influence of primordial elements.

Universalism

> "I don't want to frighten away my mainstreamers."
> New Age store owner Jacquie Glasner[377]

> "A sort of satanic 'Pentecost' of New Age occultic, cultic and Eastern mystical ideas is sweeping the globe."
> Paul McGuire, a fundamentalist Christian[378]

> "In New Age circles, where paradigm shifts are as common as carrots…"
> Philip Zalesky, staff writer, *The New York Times*[379]

New Age entrepreneurs need to attract large numbers of potential participants, if they want to become economically successful. At the same time, the potential for movement activism, read: competition, should be kept low. A universalist identity delivers just that. It does not exclude anybody *a priori*, while the usually stronger allegiance to traditional or exclusionary primordially coded identities is avoided.

New Age Discourses

How do the different actors in the New Age identity field frame the universalist elements of New Age identity?

New Agers are confronted with a heavily proliferated movement industry, which engages successfully in "product diversification." Take the magazines catering to a New Age audience. The New Age stores I investigated in Southern California carried about one

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[376] Cf. Johnston (1980: 336) for a similar argumentation regarding TM.

[377] Hall, Carla: "Tehachapi's Mind Trip," *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 1996, p. A-3.

[378] McGuire, Paul: "Hooked on Hollywood Religion," <http://www.charismamag.com:80/stories/cn196105.htm>, January 12, 1997.

[379] Zaleski, Philip: "Planet Hayden," *The New York Times*, September 19, 1996, p. C-32.

hundred different commercial New Age magazines. Table 7-1 lists 73 New Age magazines — the bulk of which are professionally edited and printed on glossy paper — each of which were sold in at least three of the stores I researched. Only four of these magazines — the regionally distributed free monthly *Whole Life Times* and the national *New Age Magazine*, *Body, Mind, and Spirit*, and *Going Bunkers?* — address to the entirety of the movement. Other magazines cater to specific currents of New Age. For instance, persons interested in Native American healing methods buy *Shaman's Drum*[380] and spiritual feminists purchase *Sage Woman*. Some magazines are devoted to even narrower niches. *Sedona! Journal of Emergence*, e.g., exclusively deals with the power of electromagnetic vortexes in Northern Arizona; *The Green Man* addresses only male pagans. All these magazines, however, clearly belong to New Age, as, with a few exceptions, they are almost exclusively sold in New Age stores.

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[380] Note that shamans in the original sense only meant Tungu medicine men from Siberia (cf. Benjamin Epstein: "Shamanic Frequencies," *Los Angeles Times (Orange County Edition)*, May 16, 1996, p. E-1). Such ignorance on their special subject is typical for New Age groups.

New Age in General	**Shamnism / Native Ameicans**	**Nutrition**
Body, Mind, and Spirit	*How About Magic*	*The Herb Companion*
Going Bunkers?	*Magical Blend*	*Herb Quarterly*
New Age Journal	*Mezlan*	*Natural Health*
Whole Earth Review	*mezlin*	*Vegetarian Journal*
Feminine Spirituality	*Shaman's Drum*	*Vegetarian Times*
Sage Woman	*Wildfire*	**Yoga**
women of power	**Angels**	*Yoga International*
(Neo-) Paganism	*Angel Times*	*Yoga Journal*
Gnosis	*Angelic Messenger*	**Body Treatments**
Green Egg	**Astrology**	*Aikido Today*
The Green Man	*Ascendant*	*Birth Gazette*
New Moon Rising	*Mountain Astrologer*	*Feng Shui*
Pagan Muse & World Report	**Extra-Sesory Phenomena**	*Massage*
Miscellaneous Spirituality	*Alternative Perceptions*	*Qi*
aspire	*Atlantis Rising*	*Tantra*
Better World	*Dream Network*	**Eastern Religions**
Changes	*E*	*Circle*
Inner Self	*ECR*	*Cyber Sangha*
Intuition	*The Empty Vessel*	*Lotus*
Fate	*Fortean Times*	*Shambala Sun*
Lapis	*Perceptions*	*Tricycle*
Light of Consciousnes	*psychodelic illumnations*	**Metaphysics**
New Perspectives	*Sedona*	*Common Boundaries*
Nexus	**Extraterrestials**	*Connecting Link*
Night Vision	*Kryon Quarterly*	*the excluded middle*
Qi	*The Planetary Waves*	*Reason*
The Quest	*UFO Magazine*	*What is Enlightenment?*
Rainbow Network	**Channeling**	**Countercultural**
	Avatar	*PROUT Journal*

Table 7-1 Popular New Age Magazines

Recall that the New Age literature tells the same story. "Anything can work," proclaims Marilyn Ferguson (1980: 86). Even more extreme, Shirley MacLaine (1983: 282) asserts her famous "everybody is god," that explicitly puts no restraints on attitudes or behavior. Matthew Fox, a by now excommunicated New-Age-leaning Catholic priest, also wants a "social conscience"[381] for the New Age movement, appealing openly to environmentalists and feminists. Yet, there is hardly any discussion between the writers and producers of different persuasion, although, they frequently hold vastly incompatible views.

One would expect the countermovements to exploit the contradictions that result from universalism. However, as most countermovement participants are unfamiliar with the

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[381] di Veroli, Robert: "New Age' Priest to Speak Here Despite Silencing," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, November 5, 1988, p. A-12.

empirical content of New Age, fundamentalist Christians and the anti-cult movement hardly ever mention New Age's internal inconsistencies. Instead, the countermovements focus nearly exclusively on negative, but indiscriminate aspects of New Age. Thereby, they do not threaten the universalist image of New Age.

As described above, New Age's eclecticism explains to some extent the concomitant ambiguity surrounding the New Age goals in the view of the audiences. Recall that ambiguity is one of the main framing devices in the reporting on New Age. On the other hand, less than 1% of newspaper articles that allude to New Age tried to resolve the apparent ambiguities via an internal differentiation of the movement. Thus, audiences neither threaten the unity of New Age identity.

Proliferation in the New Social Movements

Compare the proliferated New Age discourses media to feminist publications. Feminism is as least as ideologically heterogeneous as is New Age. Unlike New Agers, feminists, though, usually spell out their differences within the same publications and engage in vivid debates over contested issues. What is more, these publications are far more frequently non-profit or academic journals, with a staff that is more interest in the substantive contents of a journal than its market appeal.[382] Consider, however, discourses on the internet, whose institutional underpinnings do not differ that much across New Age and the new social movements. Although New Age businesses do refer to different New Age branches, hardly any conflictual discourse takes place. Take *talk.relgion.newage*, in terms of traffic the largest newsgroup explicitly dedicated to New Age. There are some controversial postings, but most of them are cross-posted from the anti-cult movement newsgroup *alt.support.ex-cult*. Most genuine New Agers do not reply to postings made by anti-cult movement members. Most intra-movement controversies, on the other hand, are based on personal animosities rather than disagreements about movement goals or practices.[383] In contrast, newsgroups like *alt.feminism* contain a considerable number of postings concerned with issues controversial within the movement.

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[382] See, however, Paglia's (1991) insightful essay on the drift of the academy towards market regulation.

[383] This communication trait has become so omnipresent in computer mediated communication (Spender 1995: 196f).

Likewise, personal websites by feminists frequently contain references to intra- and inter-movement adversaries.[384]

These differences between New Age and women's movement (as a token for all new social movements) discourses mirror the different dynamics within the different types of movements. New Agers unlike feminists are relatively unconcerned about the ideology of their fellow movement members. The reasons for this detachment from co-adherents are the comparatively weak network among New Agers and the weak allegiance of New Agers to their movement. New Agers have little stakes in their New Age identity, while for many new social movements their activism is a primary source for their self-identification.

Impact of Universalism on Movement Actions

What are the consequences of the New Age universalism? Universalism blurs the differentiation of a collective identity from its environment. Such blurring presently leads to weaker allegiances of adherents to their movement. The current demand for stable individual identities leads to this low degree of movement loyalty, as ambiguous collective identities contribute little to the desired individual identity. If individual identities crystallize at the intersection of different collective identities, then the incorporation of an ambiguous collective identity might in some cases even lead to a destabilization of individual identities. Likewise, the incorporation of less equivocal collective identities might lead to a shedding of more ambiguous collective identities. These theses apply *a forteriori* to persons with little cultural capital, as these individuals are less skilled in the keying of ambiguous frames into more distinct ones. Weak allegiances to a movement might constitute an obstacle to collective action proper, which, in the absence of selective incentives, must rely on solidarity — read loyalty to a collective identity. However, a low degree of dedication is well suited for the type of mass behavior that reproduces markets. The purchase of product or service requires some, if remote, customer identification with the corresponding industry. Too strong identifications with an industry's goals, though, bear the "danger" of activism. In a movement industry, in which privately owned business prevail, such activism is likely to lead to the establishment of a new business, since, first, businesses are the most viable

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[384] One website (<http://www.webcom.com/~yeolde/wlo/antifem.html>, May 12, 1997) by a self-declared feminist, for instance, is set up solely to offer a host of links to both what the author calls "traditional antifeminists," i.e. representatives of the countermovement and adversaries within the polity, and "*faux* feminists," feminists on the "false" side in the debate on pornography within the movement.

organizational forms for persons lacking institutional backup and, second, the mere fact that a movement industry is based in the private market creates some dynamics that lead to the reproduction of the same private market form (DiMaggio & Powell 1983). Additional market entries, however, are not in the economic interest of the already established businesses, as newcomers would foster competition. Thus, lack of activism, to which universalist identity codes bear at least an elective affinity, lies in the interest of New Age entrepreneurs. Let me summarize these patterns in the following conjecture:

> *Conjecture 7-4*: Universalist identity codes are more suitable to trigger mass behavior than collective action proper.

This property of universalism is beneficial for marketed social movements in more than one way.

Conditions for Universalism

Apart from a limitation of competition, New Age businesspersons are also economically interested in a customer pool as large as possible. The buzzword here is product diversification. The larger the range of products, the more potential customers exist. Universalist identity codes are also helpful in this respect, as their ambiguity does allow for a wider range of symbols than less equivocal identity would. This aspect, thus, also favors universalist individual identities for movements based in private business industries. As New Age is a prime case, for such movements, one would, thus, expect a prevalence of universalism in its identity codes. That is, indeed, the case. We, thus, arrive at:

> *Conjecture 7-5*: Movements, whose organizations are mainly private businesses, share an elective affinity to universalist identity codes.

This conjecture is worded this cautiously, because theoretically only the functionality of universalism for private business markets has been analyzed. Thus, strictly speaking, it has only been shown that New Age's universalist identity does facilitate the reproduction of the movement's business structure. However, I do not contend that New Age entrepreneurs deliberately inject universalist elements into New Age's identity. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that an evolution of more traditionally or even primordially coded New Age frames has been hampered by the economic dynamics that would underlie such frames. What is more, at their inception, most movements cannot draw on a large repertoire of traditional or primordial codes due to their empirical novelty. It seems, thus, reasonable to expect new collective identities to be more frequently coded universalistic, which leaves at least some

space for a causal relationship between the organization of a movement and the type of its collective identity.

The market organization of New Age has thus been crucial for the dominance of universalist New Age identity codes. It also is a key factor in the question, why this universalism has been dismissed as ambiguity or aimlessness in the media. Namely, because New Age failed to establish organizational spokespersons, no attempts to reframe the currently existing media frames from the movement's perspective were successful. A strong New Age umbrella organization could surely have bolstered the chances of a reframing of New Age. Unfortunately, though, the competitive relationship between the New Age organizations impedes the development of such an organization. Worse still, as there is no dominating competitor or group of competitors, such business can neither substitute the missing umbrella organization. Thus, the low middle class origin of the New Age constituency has not only led to an organization of New Age as a proliferated industry, which, in turn, has favored a universalist identity. It also is a key factor in the incapability of the movement to counter the detrimental press coverage, which preys on the ambiguity aspect of any universalist identity. The business likewise taints all feeble attempts to traditionalize New Age identity. These attempts will be considered in the following section.

Traditionalism and Primordialism

"New Age wisdom is essentially a revival of ancient wisdom"

New Age adherent Burt Wilson[385]

"When the tenets of the New Age Movements are examined, they are not really new at all."
Probe Ministries,
a fundamentalist Christian Organization[386]

"Throughout history people have believed in mumbo jumbo."

Ed Regis, journalist, in *The New York Times*[387]

Although universalist codings of New Age are dominating, there are some attempts to frame the movement in traditionalist terms. Since New Age is a recent phenomenon, a

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[385] In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, February 21, 1988, p. 7.

[386] Anderson, Kerby: "The New Age Movement," <http://www.probe.org/newage.htm>, May 11, 1997.

traditionalization of the movement itself would be a difficult task.[388] Instead, there are attempts to traditionalize of New Age practices.

New Age Discourses

Friends and foes of the New Age movement alike take part in this traditionalization. Nearly all introductions into New Age directed at the general public by movement supporters or fundamentalist Christian organizations, include passages like the following statement in a webpage authored by a New Ager:

> "The New Age movement is hardly novel! Its philosophy is rooted in ancient traditions, sometimes based on mythical experiences, each within different context." (Rogge 1997)

Similar assertions can be found in the writings of Marilyn Ferguson. She suggests that with the rise of the New Age movement "a twentieth century version of the ancient tribe or kinship has appeared: the network" (Ferguson 1980: 213). If successful, such traditionalization would certainly raise the devotion of New Age adherents. Unfortunately, however, statements like the last one lack doubly empirical credibility. For one, as will be discussed in chapter 8, New Age suffers from an a b s e n c e of a substantial network. Secondly, the characterization of the tribe as a "network" says little, if anything about the peculiarity of the tribes or other kinship groups. Given that the most salient features of ancient tribes, that is blood relatedness and tight social control are absent in New Age, there is little reason to connect the mass movement New Age with this old social formation.

   Indeed, most attempts by New Agers to base their practices in historical traditions is hampered by their ignorance of the actual historical developments. For instance, when I asked a New Age witchcraft practitioner, from which historical period the according to her "centuries old pagan techniques" stem, she answered:

> "They're so old, nobody remembers, when they were invented."[389]

Such and similar statements, of course, feed the image of superficiality and non-authenticity New Age has already public discourse (see chapter 6) and do not contribute to a traditionalization at all. On top, a traditionalization of New Age also must grapple with the

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[387] Regis, Ed: "Speak of the Devil," *New York Times*, November 17, 1996, p.7/32.

[388] This task is difficult but not impossible, as the successful invention of a primordially coded Padania by the Italian populist party *Lega Nord* shows.

[389] Personal interview, anonymous shop owner, Sedona, Arizona, July 7, 1996.

various ideologies New Age universalism embraces. Take the compendium *As Above, So Below* (Korenman & Wyatt 1996). Published in cooperation with the *New Age Journal* editors, this anthology can be regarded a sort of introductory textbook to New Age. The book reckons that New Age that would stand in a tradition with host of prominent celebrities. Throughout the book, quotes from *inter alia* Albert Einstein (p. 10, 241, 287), Bertrand Russell (p.16, 310), Martin Buber (pp. 28, 110, 291), André Gide (p. 38), (romantic poet) Rainer Maria Rilke (pp. 91, 198, 259, 301), Simone de Beauvoir (p. 104, 153), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (pp. 129, 144, 269, 299), Søren Kierkegaard (p. 192), (former Green Bay Packers' football coach) Vince Lombardi (p. 206), Hippocrates (p. 230), Martin Heidegger (p. 237), Walt Disney (p. 239), (jazz musician) Miles Davis (p. 239), (former California governor) Jerry Brown (p. 259), and Frantz Fanon (p. 282) insinuating that New Age would be in a longstanding tradition with a number of philosophies advocated by these celebrities. A reader schooled in elite culture would, of course, immediately ponder, how a hard-nosed enlightenment philosopher like Russell could be reconciled with Rilke, epitome of a romanticist, or, for that matter, how to accommodate Disney, an icon for the American Dream, with a militant anti-imperialist of Fanon's caliber.[390] The audiences to which this book caters, however, do not seem to require any such explanations. At least no explicit attempt to bridge the disparate ideologies above persons stand for is made. Indeed, the quotations themselves seem to be less intended to illuminate the arguments of the authors rather than to serve as pegs for a reference to celebrities. This assessment is supported by the fact that the quotations are printed in the page margins removed from the main text. For example, Fanon is quoted saying that "if the building of a bridge does not enrich the awareness of those who work on it, then the bridge ought not to be built." This excerpt — apparently taken out of its context — accompanies a passage on suggestions for New Age activism, in which "Gandhian principles" are bolstered and *inter alia* to "[o]n occasion allow immigrants, travelers *etc.* to use your home as a place of rest and refreshment" (*ibid.*, p. 282) is considered one appropriate form of activism. Fanon himself certainly would have scoffed at such reformist suggestions. Once again, thus, the insignia of science are used to construct the appearance of being scientific, a strategy that, of course, is lost on persons more familiar

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[390] To find connections between Kierkegaard and Lombardi also looks like an interesting task.

with the history of ideas. In turn, the chances to historifies in the eyes of multipliers is thwarted. In summary, the following observation can be made:

> *Observation 7-4*: Traditional identity codes of New Age are only believable to an audience that stands outside elite culture, read: the new middle class.

The inability to hardened the New Age's identity has not escaped a few of its protagonists. It is again Marylin Ferguson, who addresses most articulately the fragility of identities that do not contain any primordial or quasi-primordial codes. She insinuates a superiority of traditional over primordial identities through the belief that "identities are constituted more truly by our beliefs than by our bodies," (Ferguson 1980: 112). Ferguson also reinterprets New Age's amorphousness as a virtue. In her opinion, the openness of New Age due to the lack of an New Age manifesto, New Age delivers a less fragile identity than other historical social movements (*ibid*., p. 229).

Some countermovement organizations and spokespersons agree on the historical status of New Age practices:

> "The first thing we must understand about the New Age Movement is that it is not new. It is a compilation of old myths, of ancient Buddhism, all dusted off and translated into high-tech Western scientific terms. What has been coined the New Age Movement by the mass media is really the combining and blending of various spiritual movements that are centuries old."[391]

Paul McGuire is not the only fundamentalist Christians, who attests to the ancientness of New Age practices. There even exists an article that attempts to trace back the origins of New Age to Babylon (Kollock & Smith 1996). Another Christian Bulletin, the *Watchman Expositor* even seems to imply that New Age supporters would like to conceal the presumably ancient roots of New Age.

> "The New Age movement: Is it really new? […] Satan is very deceitful, but not very original."[392]

As has been mentioned in chapter 6.2.2, though, discourses on New Age by fundamentalist Christians almost exclusively affirm the latter and have hardly any effect on other collective

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[391] McGuire¸ Paul: "*Tracing the Sources of the New Age*," <http://www.charismamag.com:80/stories/cn196105.htm>, January 12, 1997.

[392] Walker, James: "The New Age Movement: Is It Really New?," <http://rampages.onramp.net/~watchman/chair.htm>, March 7, 1997.

actors or the bystander public. Therefore, no hardening of New Age identity can be expected from this side.

More effective criticisms of New Age come from some native Americans who claim that "[t]he New Agers are stealing from us, stealing our names, our traditions and rituals. Stealing and then selling."[393] Here again, it is New Age's business organization that devalidates claims for authenticity and thereby weakens traditionalist New Age codes.

The media are also skeptical to the historic character of New Age practices. Most media accounts on New Age do prolong the historical lifespan of the movement itself into the late sixties' counterculture, though. In 1988 and 1996, 41 out of 45 articles that discuss the origin of New Age point to the counterculture, three go even beyond the 60ies — one to the beatniks, one to theosophy in the end of the last century and one to the 1920ies — and only one points to the early 80ies. It is also widely acknowledged that New Age does employ practices that predate the label. 40 articles in the newspaper sample testify like For instance, the *Los Angeles Times* concedes that "elements of the New Age movement […] incorporate and commercialize some traditional practices."[394] Fifteen articles in 1996 and twenty in 1988 contain similar phrases. However, as has been elaborated in chapter 6.4.2, it is claimed that those practices are not authentically employed by New Agers.

Essentialism in the New Social Movements

Compare the fragile historification of New Age to the — admittedly incomplete — quasi-primordialization the new social movements have undergone. Although most new social movement theorists these days favor constructionist accounts, everyday conceptions both in and outside academia are infested with culturalist, read: traditionalist, interpretations of new social movement identities. Scholarly literature in this field is so rich and consequently so diverse, one, of course must immediately relinquish all claims to a uniform trend towards traditionalization. Nevertheless, in the wake of multiculturalism, the hardening of new social movement boundaries through a group definitions based in culturally and consequently historically molded groups has undoubtedly become more common (Gitlin 1994; Gitlin 1997a; Gitlin 1997b; Gitlin 1997c; Kimmel 1993). The "New Left" of the sixties has thereby

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[393] Spotted Eagle, Faith: "Hnds off," quoted in Duran, Phil: "The New Agers Are Stealing," <http://nativenet.uthscsa.edu/archive/nl/9408/0087.html>, April 1, 2000.

[394] Vanderknyff, Rick: "He Wants Us to Get the Connection," *Los Angeles Times*, March 19, 1994 p. F-2.

turned into a loose coalition of identity groups movements (Kauffman 1990). These successor movements tend to treat identities they such as "African American," "male" or "queer" as historical quasi-parameters, in a few deviant cases even an outright biological and thereby openly primordialist approaches are adopted.[395] Oftentimes, the impact of centuries of patriarchy on contemporary women's identities is traced; slavery experiences are seen as highly relevant for current African American identities. As these identities have been formed over a long historical process, it at first sight appears reasonable to assume that they can become unraveled only under enormous difficulties and through a long historical process.[396] This renders the identities in question to become adverse to an universalism rooted in an enlightenment tradition the New Left embraced in the sixties. It is instructive to have a look at Robin Kelley's rejection of what he calls the "neo-Enlightenment Left," as his critique is one of the few pieces that explicitly rejects a universalist coded identity for new social movements. Kelley argues that the enlightenment project is inherently particularistic, due to its historical origin.

> "These people [the neo-Enlightenment left] assume that the universal humanism they find so endearing and radical can be easily separated from the historical context of its making; indeed that is precisely what can undo the racism and imperialism it helped to justify. The racialism of the West, slavery, imperialism, the destruction of indigenous cultures in the name of 'progress,' are treated as aberrations, coincidences or are not treated at all. […] Their uncritical defense of the Enlightenment […], betrays an unwillingness to take ideas, l e t   a l o n e   h i s t o r y , seriously." (Kelley 1997: 85, emphasis mine)

In Kelley's reading, history has wedded the enlightenment project to racism, regardless of the literal contents of enlightenment ideology. Kelley is quite right to point out that universalist enlightenment rhetorics were hardly ever redeemed in social reality. That does not only apply to 19th century slavery Kelley (1997: 86) cites, but, from an empirical vantage point, holds

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[395] Even though it has found little support in the academy, the success of the so-called "femalism," a genetic interpretation of gender differences, has been so large, the press has picked it up as a new trend in feminism (Ostwald, Susanne: "Des Feminismus neue Kleider: Neue Thesen und alte Theorien in der Geschlechterdebatte," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, June 25, 1999, p. 33).

[396] Let me be clear. Of course, patriarchy and slavery a r e important facets of many individual identities aligned with the respective collective identities. And undeniably, preexisting inequalities generated through historical processes in the 19th century and before have produced certain environments, say ethnically segregated and economically deprived urban neighborhoods, in which peculiar cultural practices are produced. These practices then that might t r a n s l a t e into certain identities. However, unless one assume the validity of the collective memory concept, historical dependency does not unmediatedly generate collective identities rooted in history, as collective identity is necessarily constructed through contemporary actors that, which manufacture history.

also true for the sixties' counterculture and its movements. Many civil rights movement activities were initiated by European American college students, who also had an overproportional influence on the ideology of the new movements, a situation that has been widely criticized in movement circles. In this respect, it is true that the sixties' movements were are far cry from being universalist. Yet, the European American bias was precisely possible, because o n t h e i d e o l o g i c a l l e v e l the movements' boundaries were coded in a universalist fashion. This universalist openness of movement boundaries paved the way for an incorporation of individuals which — at least on the surface — could expect no economic and political benefits from an implementation of movement goals. Nevertheless, European Americans equipped with high cultural, material and symbolic capital joined and influenced from within a movement for deprived strata of society. Quite unsurprisingly, these European Americans, which frequently had received extensive training in skills valuable for movements entrepreneurs, heavily influenced intra-movement discourses. As a reaction to this bias, separatist groups formed. These separatist groups, however, did not exclude members on the basis of their cultural or even material capital, but instead used ethnicity, gender or even sexual orientation as indicators of cultural capital. Thereby they not only created a new form of symbolic capital attached to the groups in question,[397] but also aggravated internal group differences. Why did the separatist groups substitute quasi-primordial markers for a direct measurement of cultural capital? One advantage of the new screening devices certainly is that are cheaper than a device as intangible as cultural capital would have been, since they are a lot easier to detect. Needless to say, that the new tactics on the ideological plane deviated substantially from earlier movement rhetorics. The move from a *pro forma* universalism to exclusionary practices was legitimized by the ideological grounding of the new movements in seemingly historically formed cultural units. Thus, an explicit ideological shift from universalism to quasi-primordialism had taken place, even if in terms of social composition the successor movements probably are no more particularistic than the original counterculture has been.

But not only academics naturalize new social movement identities, activists, who, to be sure, frequently maintain close ties to academia do so, too. For instance, transsexual women

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[397] This form of symbolic capital never attained universal currency, though, as the conservative backlash has shown.

pose a threat to separatist feminist identity precisely because gender is an identity most people (in and outside the academe) still treat as biological distinction. Transsexual women, even though being women according to the legal definition, were turned away from the 19th *Michigan Womyn's Music Festival* because only "natural womyn-born womyn" fitted the collective identity many of the participants advocated (Gamson 1997: 188). While these exclusionary politics by women's movement activists might have arguably resulted from painstaking reflections on gender categories, the overwhelming majority of the audiences mostly "short-circuit" from the representatives of identity movements and their (alleged and real) foes to flat-out essentialist interpretations of the respective collective identities. When *Newsweek* groups together Yugoslav Premier Slobodan Milosevic, a checkout clerk, an impoverished Vietnam war veteran, and a banker as "white males" (Gitlin [1995] 1996: 120), all attempts to justify such categorization as being based in the common culture these individuals share will fail.

By and large, thus, the following trend can be observed.

Observation 7-5: Over the last decades, an increasing number of new social movement identities have undergone a quasi-primordialization

Quasi-primordialization depicts two different, albeit interrelated, trends. One trend is to view existing differences between as that deeply rooted in macro or collective history (as opposed to the specific historical environment, in which an individual has been socialized), they cannot be undone over a short period of time. The other trend is to substitute existing differences in habitus in empirical determinations of that habitus with essentialist characteristics — such as pigmentation, geographical origin according to parental lineage, or, presumably biological determined sexual orientation — which at the aggregate level enjoy extremely high, yet spurious, correlations with the targeted habitus. Such proceeding, to be sure, has been facilitated by the fact that the habit in question frequently have been and are brought about to a large extent by discriminatory practices which based on the very same essentialist criteria.

While on the causes of these developments can only be speculated here, what can be said, is that the existing institutional environment of the new social movements did certainly not prohibit quasi-primordialism. On the one hand, the organizational underpinnings colleges and universities delivered obviate the necessity to erect capitalist organizations, which could have suffered financially from more exclusionary identities. On the other hand, academic research

also paved the way for a more believable historification of movement identities. Under more believable is here understood mainly higher narrative fidelity, which can be easier achieved with the toolbox intellectual theories delivers. It appears, though, that most research done in ethnic and other identity studies also lends some empirical credibility to culturalist identities, even if many scholars in these fields tend to officially embrace Feyerabend's take on empirical evidence.

Collective Identity Type and Collective Action Potential

Does the quasi-primordialization of the new social movements affect their collective action potential? Undoubtedly, over the last decades the new social movements have enjoyed considerable success in terms of the amount of collective action proper they have stimulated. In contrast, New Age has triggered precious little collective action proper, but "only" collective behavior. Surely, many other variables differ among the two types of movements, but, then again, there is some indication that collective action proper is more easily achieved with primordially coded identities than with universalist ones.

Recall that the most successful contemporary collective actors — modern nation states — all recur to primordial codings of the collective identities of their constituencies. Recollect, too, that the image of belonging to a historically stable group helps to alleviate the identity crisis sociologist since Durkheim posited for the modern individual.[398] Apart from these two already mentioned mechanisms, quasi-primordiality moreover insinuates a sort of inevitability of the partaking of individuals in the fate of the groups they have been a ascribed to. Such conception, of course, eases the free-rider problem, in particular, if the provision of the collective good in question — here: minority rights — is of continuos character. In sociological vernacular, solidarity arises. In contrast, a universalism a la New Age, which is based in a variety of disparate practices, makes it difficult to construct a we-feeling. In fact, the persistent necessity to provide a variety of dissimilar goods to the movement participants is a typical characteristic mass behavior, which can only be sustained by selective incentives. The organizational setup of New Age thus shares at minimum an elective affinity with mass behavior and is averse to collective action proper.

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[398] That this identity crisis itself is most likely a social construct is of no relevance here, what is important is that people act according to this construct.

8 RECRUITMENT TO NEW AGE

> "[A movement] recruits members, usually from selected class and status levels, who are more or less ready to act in certain ways." (Gerth & Mills 1954: 438)

> "We have a few coordinates for mapping the civil institutional turf, but they tend to be crude and elusive ones. […] And while scholars have recognized the importance of kinship and friendship structures for mobilization, they have rarely attempted to characterize standard movement profiles of these variable features of social structure." (McCarthy 1996: 142)

According to conventional wisdom of social movement theory, dense informal networks are the cradle of movements. In this chapter the universal validity of the thesis that social movements arise o n l y from informal networks will be questioned. It will instead be argued that movements whose constituency comes from a certain class background — middle America — do not require dense networks for either their emergence or growth. In fact, the position of many lower middle class persons in a tightly knit network — the nuclear family — prohibits them from joining "their" movements such as New Age. Accordingly, for movements that primarily recruit from *middle America* strong pre-existing networks, read: family embeddedness, turn out as obstacles rather than facilitators of movement mobilizations.

There are, of course, two immediate questions to this hypothesis. Why do family matters not concern movements based in other classes? How do low middle class movements recruit if not through networks? Both questions will now be addressed in the present chapter, which introduces a set of conjectures that link social class, networks and social movement recruitment structures.

Recruitment Pools

Any analysis of recruitment patterns is well advised to delineate the universe of prospective movement recruitees. Although the assumption that classes-in-themselves turn to classes-for themselves is flawed, most movements' recruitment pools are limited to certain somewhat

objective classes. Yet, some scholars would like to delink recruitment pools from objective classes, since class positions themselves are negotiated and, hence, alterable:

> "Mobilization potential should be conceived in itself as a set of social relations, as an interactive and negotiated perception of the opportunities and constraints of action shared by a number of people." (Melucci 1996: 64)

Long-range social theory might proceed in such fashion. However, in the short run and for middle-range phenomena such as social movements, the mobilization potential remains essentially constant over time. Ironically, to argue otherwise runs the danger of obfuscating aggregates of objectively similar social positions with collective actors. When orthodox Marxists cannot grapple with the fact that classes-in-themselves do not turn into classes-for-themselves, those scholars who argue that given a collective actor its mobilization potential is infinitely malleable deny that most classes-for-themselves are rooted classes-in-themselves. The labor movement has not and will not rely primarily on industrialists for the expansion of its rank-and-file, although some capitalist "converts" might help its cause symbolically and, due to their management skills, might even become designated movement entrepreneurs. Similarly, the Ku-Klux-Clan will not extensively recruit among African-Americans and Norwegian nationalists will rarely appeal to Slovak citizens. Beyond such obvious cases, formally universalist movements are frequently also restricted to well-defined classes. As has been mentioned already several times, new social movements recruit disproportionally from the new middle class. That New Age converts disproportionally low middle class members has been established in the previous chapter. Thus, it seems advisable to distinguish somewhat objective classes, which are fairly stable over time and might or might not limit the mobilization potential of a movement.

If the class background of the recruitment pool matters, the question becomes, how does so. In the previous chapter some effects that result from the differential resources of the movement constituency have been identified. In this chapter I will focus on a variable that is not directly tied to the definition criteria of classes, i.e. the amounts and types of material, cultural, and symbolic capital held. Instead, the influence on class position on collective action is also mediated through network structures empirically associated with different classes but conceptually distinct. I will show that different classes command over differently structured networks, which in turn influence recruitment patterns. Let me, though, first identify two competing models of movement recruitment.

Networks and Mobilization: Competing Hypotheses

When reviewing political process and sociology of religion approaches to recruitment — "conversion" in the sociology of religion vernacular — one can detect two fundamentally different conceptualizations. Political process theory emphasizes the importance of dense networks for the emergence of movements. In contrast, sociology of religion approaches focus on *structural availability* (Snow [1976] 1993: 208). Key to movement susceptibility to movement recruitment in the latter approach is thus the absence of a substantial network in the environment of the potential convert. Let me review these two theses.

Network Thesis

In the early 70s Oberschall introduced the notion of "bloc recruitment" into social movement theory. Since then, theoretical and empirical work from otherwise disparate perspectives has piled up on the conjecture that most movement participants are recruited through pre-existing network ties (Bearman 1993; Bearman & Everett 1993; Diani 1995; Diani & Lodi 1988: 115; Donati 1984: 843; Fantasia 1988; Friedman & McAdam 1992: 158; Gould 1993: 191ff; Hechter 1987: 47; Jasper & Poulsen 1995: 494f; Jenkins 1983: 535; Kim & Bearman 1997: 74; Klandermans 1990: 131; Kriesi 1988a: 48, 53f; Marwell, Oliver & Prahl 1988; Marwell & Oliver 1993; Marx Ferree 1992: 39; McAdam 1982; McAdam 1986; McAdam 1988: 144-146; McAdam 1994: 43; McAdam & Poulsen 1993; McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987: 20f; Snow & Oliver 1995: 574; Strang & Soule 1998: 268; Zwick 1990: 68; but see Jasper & Goodwin 1999: 117). *Bloc recruitment* denotes the merger of pre-existing voluntary associations into a movement (Oberschall 1973: 125). At times movement organization even specifically target leaders of organizations whose goals show affinity with its own movement goals for recruitment and, if successful, thereby "convert" not only the leader himself, but also at least part of his following (Oberschall 1993: 24). This way "multi-organizational fields," (Fernandez & McAdam 1989) in which sympathetic movement organizations recruit reciprocally members, develop. These dynamics facilitate the recruitment process significantly, although in case an organization that is perceived as ideologically hostile by some of the members of the original organizations enters the multi-organizational field, a schism of the movement might result. For instance, "[w]ithin the [National Office] faction [of the *Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)*], there was the continual suspicion that the [Progressive Labor Party] joined SDS in order to spread its ideology and to recruit new

members from those already in the SDS network," (Balser 1997: 219) which ultimately led to the destruction of the SDS. By and large, however, multi-organizational fields have been remarkably resistant to movement schism and indeed fostered movement growth and efficacy (Bearman & Everett 1993; Carden 1978; Diani 1995; Fernandez & McAdam 1989). But not only inter-organizational recruitment depends heavily on ties. The seminal study of the *Mississippi Freedom Summer Project* has shown that individuals' informal friendship ties to movement participants predict individual movement participation best (McAdam 1988). The network tie thesis has performed well on data coming from the Dutch new social movements in general (Klandermans 1990) and the peace movement in particular (Kriesi 1988), and the Italian environmentalist movement (Diani & Lodi 1988). In the case of the Philippine Huk rebellion, it has been shown that the opposite is equally true: Strong ties outside the movement might lead to its dissolution (Goodwin 1997). It even has been convincingly theorized, that certain network structures might render *selective incentives*, the *sine qua non* in rational choice models of collective action, superfluous (Kim & Bearman 1997). In short, the review of the network theorem has been overwhelmingly favorably on both theoretical and empirical planes.

Availability Thesis

In view of the above evidence hardly anyone still follows the proposition that "[w]hen people are divorced from their community and work, they are free to reunite in new ways" (Kornhauser [1959] 1960: 60). To be sure, many scholars acknowledge the importance of *b i o g r a p h i c a l   availability,* i.e. "the absence of personal constraints that might increase the costs and risks of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities" (McAdam 1986: 70).[399] But biographical availability primarily focuses on constraints related to the potential recruits' stage in the life cycle. Consequently, "perhaps no variable is as closely linked to the concept of biographical availability as age" (Wiltfang & McAdam 1991: 996). In contrast, biographical availability is largely silent on the social structural location of prospective movement members.[400] In any

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[399] The findings on this theses are, however, not entirely unequivocal, because "of the four measures [McAdam and his associates] use [in the test of their hypotheses] — age, marital status, children, and employment status — only one [— age —] supported the theory that biographical availability is a necessary precondition for high-risk/cost activism" (Erickson Nepstad & Smith 1999: 24).

[400] Biographical availability does implicitly make some assumptions about the social origins of movement participants, for instance by suggesting that "students, especially those from privileged classes, are simply free,

case, the, as far as I know, only study that examines the differential impact of biographical availability and network embeddedness on recruitment processes downplays the role of biographical (though not structural) availability and emphasizes the importance of potential recruits' relational ties to activism for recruitment to the Nicaragua Exchange, US-Central-American peace movement group (Erickson Nepstad & Smith 1999: 33f). Thus, involvement in other activities associated with one's embeddedness in, e.g., professional or family networks, might hamper recruitment because of time restrictions associated with network membership, but other things being equal, embeddedness in dense networks remains a facilitating factor for recruitment.

Yet, students of new religious movements have repeatedly pointed to the fact that most new religious movement converts join these movements precisely because they do n o t have any s t r o n g ties to anybody (Gerlach & Hine 1970: 82; Snow, Zurcher & Ekland-Olson 1980; Snow & Machalek 1984; Snow [1976] 1993: 208; Stark & Bainbridge 1980: 1380; Stark & Roberts 1982: 60, 63; Volinn 1985: 150). New religious movements have consistently targeted persons lacking a tightly knit friendship network. These structurally available persons lack close emotional bonds and command an above average amount of free time; sometimes they feel isolated or alienated from their environment. From a functionalist perspective, one might even argue that new religions integrate anomic elements of society (Robbins 1988: 29). While not sharing this assessment, I do think that there is merit in the hypothesis that individuals lacking strong personal commitments are more available and thus more susceptible to movement recruitment u n d e r   c e r t a i n   c o n d i t i o n s , which will be elaborated below. In fact, the findings resulting from the study of the failure of the Huk rebellion quoted above in favor of the network thesis might equally be interpreted as the inverse of the "availability" hypothesis described here.

Still, most works on new religious movements that analyze recruitment — "conversion" in the jargon of sociology of religion — processes, a l s o contend that the most efficient recruitment is conducted through already existing network ties (Gerlach & Hine 1970: 79; Heelas 1996; Snow & Machalek 1984: 182; Snow, Zurcher & Ekland-Olson 1980; Stark & Bainbridge 1980: 1378). On the other hand, a study on the Nichiren Shoshu Buddhist

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to a unique degree, that tend to make activism too time consuming or risky for other groups to engage in" (McAdam 1988a: 44).

movement finds that most non-network recruited members had had only few ties before joining the movement (Snow [1976] 1993). A closer inspection of Snow's ethnography reveals that most recruitments were achieved through feeble network ties, a finding consistent with theoretical expectations derived from early network theory (Granovetter 1973). The recruited persons themselves maintained only few network ties that required commitment. In turn, this suggests that the higher efficacy of network recruitment can be explained through a better selection of prospective recruits. After all, non-network proselytizing by Nichiren Shoshu Buddhists is conducted quite amateurishly, as random pedestrians and diners are targeted. In a different context, the *Landmark Forum*, the largest New Age organization, has indeed institutionalized the recruitment through network ties. Non-members normally o n l y obtain knowledge of introductory meetings of the *Forum*, if they hold an invitation from a current *Landmark* member.[401] In other words, management techniques might account in extreme cases for the seeming importance of networks. In still a different vein, Stark and Bainbridge contend, that "the occult milieu […] does not spread through or [is] sustained by social networks," (Stark & Bainbridge 1980: 1392) but rather is created and perpetuated through the mass media.

It, thus, seems that availability and network theses are valid for different movement types. This thesis is hardly new. It is well known that millenarian movements do not appeal to those well integrated in local kinship communities (Gerlach & Hine 1970: 82). Yet, to my knowledge, no systematic analysis of conditions that decide on the applicability of either of the two recruitment patterns has been made.

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[401] Personal experience, *Landmark Forum*, Los Angeles chapter, introductory meeting, Torrance, CA, August 7, 1996.
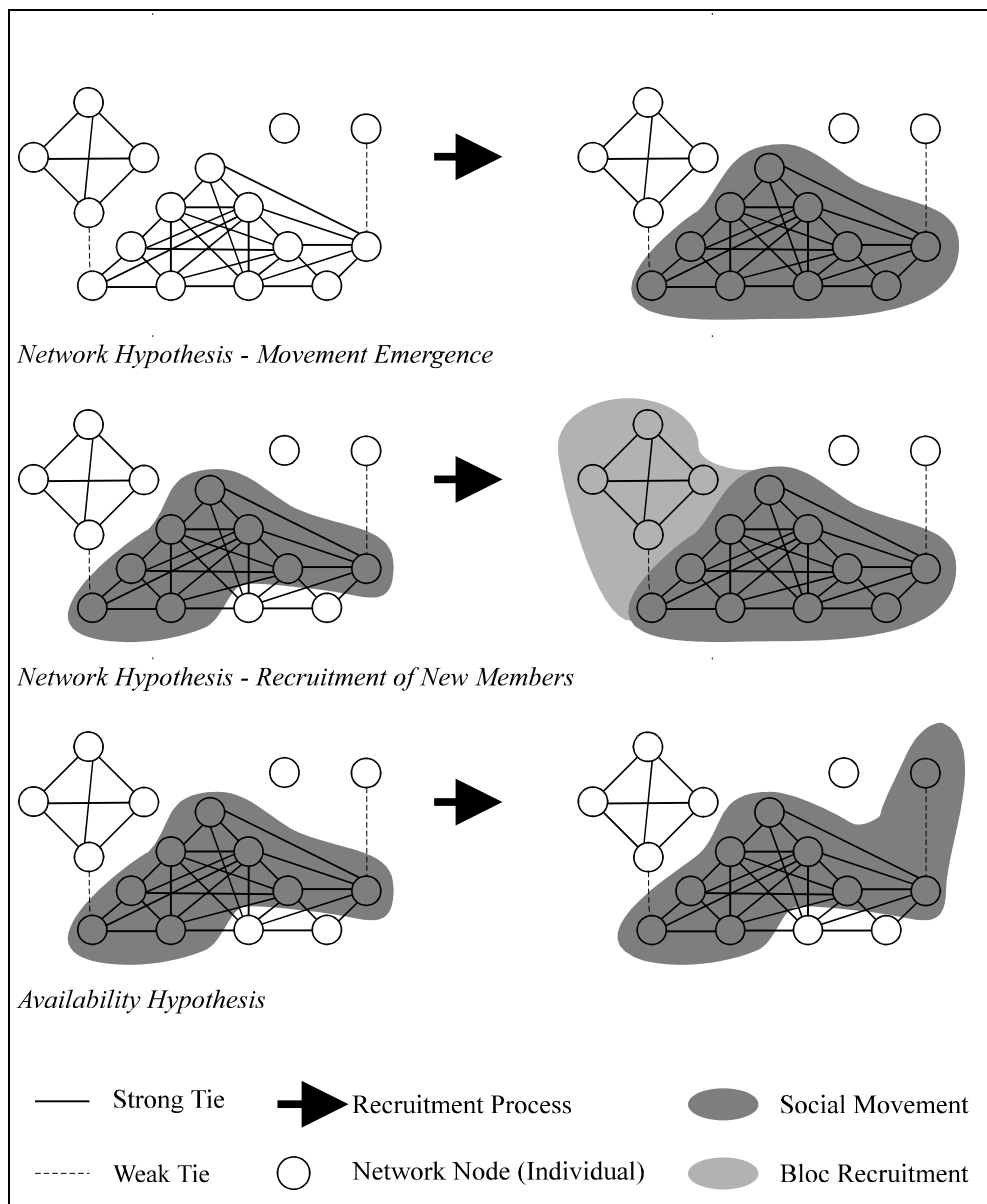
Figure 8-1: Recruitment Patterns

Read this way, availability and network hypotheses become rival explanations, and, as will be argued, are valid for different avenues of recruitment employed by different types of movements. The availability hypothesis implies that the utilization of w e a k network ties is a superior technique to select those persons that are not embedded in strong networks and thus most susceptible to movement recruitment. The "weakness" of a tie in this sense is characterized by the amount of time spent for its maintenance, the emotional intensity it evokes, and the intimacy and reciprocal services that are attached to it (Granovetter 1973: 1361). Persons join the movement, because they are structurally available and n o t located in dense networks themselves. The network hypothesis on the contrary is based on the

assumption that persons join the movement because they are part of a dense network containing many (strong) ties. These ties allow for an interactive redefinition of the nature of the social environment or social problems, which then results in an emergent movement (e.g., McAdam 1986; Kim & Bearman 1997). Clearly, these persons are n o t structurally available before they enter, or rather transform into, the movement. Collective action a r i s e s out of the network. Figure 8-1 visualizes the two competing hypotheses.

Synthesis

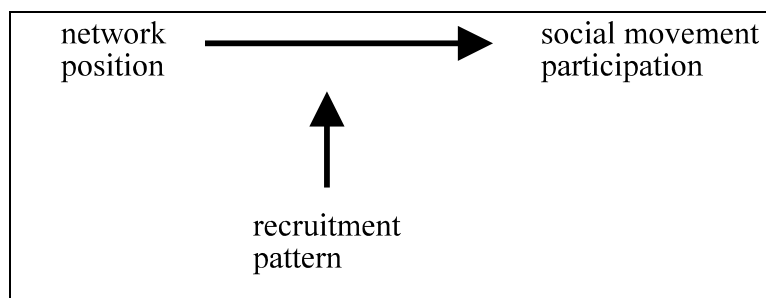network position ⟶ social movement participation

recruitment pattern

Figure 8-2: General Model of Availability and Network Hypotheses

The key for the reconciliation of the two theses lies in the examination of a theoretical drawback of current network studies of social movements. Both availability and network hypothesis predict movement development given established networks. Unfortunately, though, the network variable is by no means unrelated to another key independent variable in the political process approach, namely the pool of resources available to the actual and prospective constituency of a movement. To be sure, the network position of an individual does implicitly contain some assumptions of the distribution of resources w i t h i n a network. Individuals at central nodes of the network, i.e. persons maintaining many ties to other network members, indirectly command over more resources.[402] Vice versa, persons with more material resources at their disposal can maintain ties more easily. After all, there exist some costs to communication, which is the major mechanism for the maintenance of ties. These costs range from obvious cost of telecommunication and commuting to less obvious opportunity costs. Yet, until now there has been little concrete hypothesizing around the question, how resources available to an individual influence his or her network position. Even less attention has been paid to the

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[402] Williams (1994: 787) maintains that the reverse is also true: Persons with more resources are drawn into leadership positions.

question, how existing resource distributions foster or prohibit the construction of networks in the first place (Diani 1996: 1055).[403]

Poor People's Movements

The neglect of the theoretical connection between social class and network organization comes as no surprise, as there is little variation in the class bases of movements examined with the help of network analysis (Goodwin & Jasper 1999: 34f). These analyses of social movements mostly focus on movements privileged stratum of the population, namely the new middle classes. The *Mississippi Freedom Summer* study sets the tone: Participants "were expected to be financially independent" (Fernandez & McAdam 1989: 318) during a two month period dedicated solely to movement activities. Even if participation requirements for movement activities are less demanding in other cases, it is obvious that new social movement participants surveyed in other studies command over a rich resource pool (Brand 1987: 42; Dalton, Kuechler & Bürklin 1990: 7; Klandermans 1991: 27; Offe 1985: 828ff; Rochon 1988: 16f).

Studies that analyze movement activity by the least affluent population strata — the unemployed or social security recipients — seem to rely much less on the network hypothesis, when it comes m o v e m e n t mobilization. Their catchphrase is facilitation through elites (Cress & Snow 1996; Piven & Cloward 1977; Piven & Cloward 1992). In fact, most poor people's movements cannot be sustained without what Cress and Snow (1996: 1104ff) call a "benefactor." This benefactor — be it a person or an organization made up of resource rich people — then usually occupies a central network position. Together with the communication cost problem raised above, we thus arrive at

> *Conjecture 8-6*: The more material resources individuals command, the higher the likelihood that they will take on a central position in the network.

That resources are important for mobilization should be obvious since the advent of resource mobilization theory. Here, the direct path from resources to mobilization success — dotted in — has been complemented with a second path, which is mediated through network structure. What is interesting in this respect is that in the case of poor people's movements networks only matter, once they find an ally from outside their constituency. Indeed, it has been forcefully shown that poor people do command dense networks, probably denser than those

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[403] An exception is Diani (1997)..

of the new middle classes and certainly more vital in their everyday life. Poor people's networks whose ties are characterized through material reciprocity enable the least affluent strata of the population to cope with the everyday shortage of material goods they encounter (Stack [1975] 1997; Snow & Anderson 1993). Because they fulfill this vital function, these networks are extremely stable. Yet, they are not a fertile ground for movement mobilizations, unless elite factionalism creates opportunities for political entrepreneurs from groups endowed with more cultural and material resources than the beneficiaries to enter the network structure as leaders. These leaders need to trigger *cognitive liberation* (McAdam 1982: 44ff). We thus arrive at:

> *Conjecture 8-7*: Networks, whose central nodes command a high amount of both material and cultural resources relative to their environment, i.e. the society they are located in, have a much higher propensity to generate movement activity, than equally structured networks, whose central nodes lack these resources.

> *Conjecture 8-8*: Poor people develop extensive solidarity networks out of necessity.

> *Corollary 8-1*: Poor people's movements usually develop out of dense networks, in which central nodes have been inserted from outside.

So far, there have been hardly any news. Even though the relationships between the central independent variables have been rearranged, the bottom line remains, that, if the network density and amount of resources variables take on high values, chances are, a movement will develop.

Middle American Movements

Contemplate next new religious movements, where prior existing network structure is weak.[404] What is the strength of their material bases? Income and wealth of new religious movements members usually lie somewhere in-between that of poor people and the new middle class (Barker 1989: 14; Hess 1993: 5; Knoblauch 1989: 517; Robbins 1988: 4, 44; Schneider 1991: 53; Stenger 1990: 400; B. Turner [1983] 1991: 200); see also previous chapter). Recall that most New Agers are "younger, […] Caucasian[s] with lower to mid-level careers in public or corporate businesses" (Bromley 1997: 127). They have enjoyed some college education, but frequently hold no degree and work as a small entrepreneurs or in clerical jobs. Unlike poor people, new religious movement participants do not need to

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[404] Partly this weakness is rooted in the low cultural resources New Age members hold, as the more experienced firms are in research and development — entrepreneurial areas that presuppose high amounts of cultural capital — the more network ties they pursue (Powell et al. 1996: 117f, 121).

maintain solidarity networks for their everyday survival and can afford to spend part of their money on non-essential goods. However, they usually work long hours. Mostly, their working hours are fixed, which renders time a scarce resource. Persons from this background who lack a friendship network at work and/or a family are those who are most susceptible to movement recruitment. Lower middle class members, who do not feel isolated or alienated, usually do not participate in any movements. Depending on one's theoretical persuasion one might invoke any number of reasons, ranging from the free rider problem to Gramscian hegemony, for this apathy. Most parsimoniously their passivity can be explained by the centrality of the nuclear family network, possibly supplemented through some informal friendship groups that are mostly not explicitly purposive (Gans [1988] 1991: 44). The relative affluence of low middle class members relieves them of the need to develop larger networks. At the same time, there are no institutionalized avenues of network building, as it is the case for the new middle classes and their movements. For now, we obtain the, albeit for lack of generality most provisional,

> *Conjecture 8-9*: Lower middle class movements recruit those parts of the class that are most isolated, i.e., do not command over any substantial network ties.

My observations on New Age validate this thesis. 27 out of 29 participants in a workshop on relationship techniques at the 1997 *Whole Life Expo* in Del Mar, turned out to be single, although evidently such seminars clearly cater to couples. This observation replicates earlier data on Sri Chimoy adherents, who were also disproportionally frequent single (Gussner & Berkowitz 1988: 154). The thirteen persons that took together with myself an introductory meditation session at San Diego's North Park Sri Chimoy center also invariably arrived single. New Age literature also covers relentlessly dyadic relationships. Most New Age stores have their own section on the topic. The protagonists of most New Age works, including the ones reviewed above, are single, but long for a dyadic relationship. The disproportionate number of women participating in New Age in conjunction with the almost complete disregard for gay and lesbian culture constitutes an additional indicator for the solitude of many New Agers.

New Age is not the only low middle class movement that did not emerge from strong networks. The post-1973 right-to-life movement, which following US supreme court's decision on *Roe vs. Wade* increasingly mobilized middle American "women homemakers,
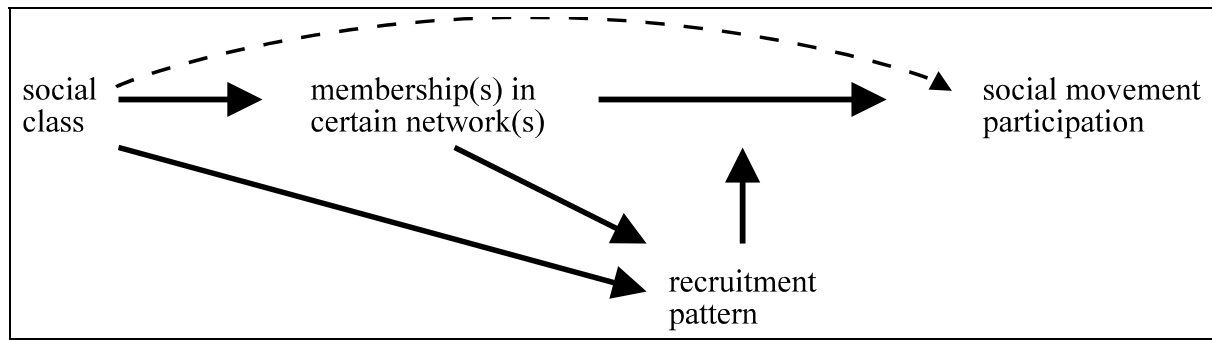
Figure 8-3 Proposed Model (Dotted path inessential for present discussion)

[… who] faced very few cross-pressures" (Luker 1984: 145f), has been able to primarily rely on "self-recruitment" of prospective constituents.

It should be emphasized that low middle class movements in the past did recruit from dense networks. In the second half of the 19th century, the US-American populist movement mobilized mainly petty farm owners (Pickering 1994: IIa), and in doing so was able to draw on the strong associational life of the Farmer's alliances (Hicks 1931: 128-152; Goodwyn 1978: 32-54). Recruitment strategies are thus not immediately dependent on the level of economic resources available to potential recruits, but are contingent on the actual class configuration that also encompasses cultural and social capital. In the case of middle America, organizational avoidance combined with ideology that stresses the importance of nuclear families interacts with the material circumstances of the low middle class to favor recruitment of those persons structurally available.

New Middle Class Movements

Consider now the new middle classes. Already almost half a century ago it has been observed that among members of the privileged strata usually a higher level of interaction exists (Mills [1956] 1959). The reason for this high level of interaction lies in the institutional setup new middle class members face. They work or have realistic aspirations to work in the upper echelons in the service sector and have usually completed or are about to complete at least a four year college education. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, universities bring together for like-minded people for the first time and supply them with crucially important (Cress & Snow 1996) meeting spaces, where social movements can be initialized. What is more, movement activity is intrinsic to the careers for some new middle class members (Gelb & Palley 1982; Rose 1997: 483). Thus, even after their departure from university, new middle class members affiliated with new social movements remain in institutionally

sponsored networks. For instance, Bernstein (1997: 550) shows that lesbian/gay movements in a drive to support pro-movement legislation "activated friendship, o r g a n i z a t i o n a l and p r o f e s s i o n a l networks to arrange meetings between legislators and their gay and lesbian constituents and other supporters" (emphasis mine). In essence, we obtain

> *Conjecture 8-10*: Institutional paths foster networking between members of the new middle classes, which enables movement recruitment through network ties.

Combining corollary *8-1* with conjectures *8-9* and *8-10* yields the central contention of this chapter, namely:

> *Corollary 8-2*: Class position determines the design of networks, from which movements can recruit or emerge.

The model obtained is shown in Figure *8-3*. Note that this is not class in the Marxian sense. I do not argue that certain classes translate into certain class-based movements. Rather, I take original resource mobilization theory seriously and argue that certain distributions of resources combined with certain institutional patterns result in certain movements. There is no class-in-itself that mutates into a class-for-itself at some level of economic or societal development or some materially satisfied middle classes that turn to postmaterialist values and create self-expressive new social movements.

Instead, the present explanation constrains rational choice with institutionalist accounts. Certain institutions, in this case the educational system, bring together a set of similarly cognitive predisposed persons with considerable cultural and material resources at hand (university students), which lays the fundament for networks, out of which viable movements arise. It p a y s the individual to join or create these movements either indirectly through the acquisition of skills she later needs for her profession or directly through the transformation of movement positions into institutionalized careers as employees of NGOs, in the academy or political pressure groups. It is then a matter of "taste," if one engages in the New Right or the New Left. Effects of structural availability are under such circumstances suppressed, unless one considers effects of involvement in movement organizations that serve similar goals (Kitts 1999: 568). A different set of people commands considerably less social and cultural capital, but is financially secure, though not independent. A minority of persons in this set suffer from both social isolation — mainly in the form of the lack of a life partner — and the incongruence between their aspirations and their actual social status. There

class	typical movement	most important networks for class members	recruitment pattern (rank and file)	type of leaders	class background of leaders	organiza- tional form	political impact
poor people	movement for the un- employed	extended family; friendship networks (inception soli- darity induced)	network recruitment (bloc recruitment)	movement entre- preneurs; volunteers	new middle class	voluntary associations; formally organized	medium
low middle class	New Age	nuclear family	structural availability	movement entre- preneurs	low and new middle class	business organization s	low
new middle class	women's movement	nuclear family; friendship net- works (inception institutionalized)	network recruitment	career volunteers	new middle class	voluntary associations; informal ly and formally organized	high

Table 8-1   Predicted Recruitment and Mobilization Patterns
Highlighted cells are explained by the main model developed in this chapter

is no institutional setup to bring these persons together, nor do they have the skills to create their own movements from below. It p a y s (or better: seems to pay) for these persons to join groups that seemingly operate on the same premises as the higher status movements described above. The pay-off is both to become embedded in a network — possibly even find the informal network, i.e. the family, one is longing for — and to be member of a group that supposedly grants a higher status.

    From here, one might want to continue and think about the different dynamics that develop out of those different patterns. Table 8-1 summarizes the theoretical patterns that arise from my conjectures, and also contains some suggestions for further development. Let me outline the impact of different recruitment patterns on organizational form here.

Impact on Organizational Form

Both new social movements and poor people's movements hence usually start out as and grow through dense networks. Most likely, these networks will persist once the movement has developed. Thus, informal networks will play a central role in the reproduction of these movements. In contrast, New Age as a typical low middle class movement cannot rely on any substantial pre-existing networks, nor does the institutional environment New Age organizations face, namely a market consisting of petty firms, encourage the establishment of movement networks.

The difference in the organizational structure of poor people's and new middle class movements lies in the role formal organizations play in movement development. As poor people usually lack the cultural capital to transform their networks directly into effective agents for movement action, one would expect that formal organizations led by persons outside the beneficiary constituency would dominate the poor people's social movement industry. New middle class movements, on the other hand, might take on both informal and formal organizational forms. Which of these forms predominate, will mainly depend on the political opportunity structure. For instance, the political opportunity structure for the women's movement in Germany was seductive to a network of small, autonomous and informal groups, while the in the US both informal groups and a national umbrella organization flourished (Rucht 1996). To sum up, poor people's movements and new social movements thus not only recruit through and emerge from networks, but are also reproduced in network form.

Movements with a predominant low middle class constituency, however, will usually not originate in pre-existing networks and lack the more formalized institutional organizational opportunities most new social movements can recur to. Thus, one would predict, they in turn will be sustained to a much lesser extent through informal networks than their counterparts discussed above. Yet, undoubtedly, also for these movements some organizational vehicle is critical for movement survival (Jenkins 1983; McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987). The organizational problem is solved by many of the new religious movements through the emergence of capitalist business organizations that carry much of the organizational burden. The New Age movement is prototypical in this respect. At the fringe of the movement there are a few non-profit organizations, for example the *Church of Religious Science* and several neo-pagan covens, which mimic the grassroots groups of the new social movements from an organizational point of view. New Age's main organizational base is a "network" of small businesses. New Age bookstores, practitioners in New Age disciplines such as tarot card reading, channeling, rolfing, etc. are somewhat related to each other. The omnipresent practice of referral boards in New Age stores testifies to the existence of such relationships. But these businesses are always competitors for the financial resources of their customers and

therefore are unlikely to develop a network of strong ties.[405] In sum, New Age unlike movement that originate in higher or lower strata of the population, neither recruits from dense networks nor does it develop any substantial networks. Instead, New Age recruits those persons that failed to become embedded in the class-specific network, that is, families. Of course, this lack of network structure does also entail important recuperations of the movement identity and its collective action potential. These will be discussed in the wrap-up of this thesis in the following chapter. I will now briefly summarize the findings developed in this chapter.

Summary

Several years ago, it was pointed out, that "existing studies fail to acknowledge conceptually or treat empirically the fact that individuals are invariably embedded in many organizational or associational networks or individual relationships that may expose the individual to conflicting behavioral pressures" (McAdam & Poulsen 1993: 641). With the exception of the study this statement stems from and a recent study on an environmental group (Kitts 1999), this observation unfortunately still rings true. Even more strikingly though, while network models have increasingly become more dynamic, there has been no attempt to explain the shape of network structures themselves, as if networks would fall ready-made from the sky.

My findings suggest instead that pre-movement network patterns are class specific. Dense and widespread networks prevail at the high and low ends of the social strata, while the most important networks of the low middle class are family-centered and consequently much narrower. The former thus command over the basic organizational underpinnings for the emergence of collective action with voluntary associations as its vehicle, a process that has been described by a legion of movement literature. New Age and other low middle class movements cannot recur to such fertile network ground. Rather, they have frequently to overcome the strong embeddedness of their potential followers in their respective families or workplaces, which are reluctant towards a redefinition of the existing social realities. In line with these different points of departure, different recruitment strategies emerge. New social movements have arisen from and still arise from preexisting networks that foster cognitive liberation through (communicative) interaction. New Age has instead relied on weak network

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[405] Note, that while weak ties are particularly important for the growth of a collective (Granovetter 1973), strong ties are undoubtedly more important in the generation of solidarity, read: collective action..

ties in the recruitment of socially more isolated individuals. While this has resulted in the rapid growth of its constituency, collective action by New Agers has remained conspicuously absent. As in previous millenarian movements, "a fundamental vagueness about the actual way in which the new society will be brought about" (Hobsbawm [1959] 1971: 58) has remained. This vagueness will be at the center of my concluding analysis of New Age.

9 CONCLUSION

As is customary, in the final chapter the most important findings of the present study will be summarized. After this review, I will outline some implications of the findings for two areas of social theory, namely, the theory of democracy and social movement theory.

Summary of Results

With the theoretical apparatus developed over the last three chapters, the question why New Age has not evolved as a major collective actor in either polity or society, but has instead remained a fairly stable mass movement, can now be answered.

The Class Basis of New Age

The most fundamental reason for New Age's development lies in the qualities of its recruitment pool. While New Age is certainly not a class movement, it is — like virtually all movements — a class-based movement, as its constituency comes overwhelmingly from a fairly well defined class of people. This class is not a social class-for-itself, but it constitutes a sociological class-in-itself, which consists of "ensembles of actors in similar social positions, which, since they face similar conditions and have undergone similar conditionings, are prone to hold similar predispositions and interests" (Bourdieu [1984] 1991: 12, translation mine). The class most New Age adherents stem from has been termed *middle America* (Gans [1988] 1991). Roughly speaking, middle Americans and their West European equivalents[406] command over little economic capital, less instutionalized cultural capital and embodied cultural capital that is of little use in the construction of collective action proper.[407] What they lack most, though, is social capital.

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[406] For readability reasons I stick here to the well-known label of middle America to circumscribe the class origin of New Agers in both America and Europe. Nominally, the theory of middle American individualism applies only to the US, but the structure of New Age's recruitment pool is fairly similar across North America and Western Europe, even if this pool is probably proportionally smaller in Europe. In fact, middle America shares important qualities with the "masses" that, according to mass society theory, have fueled the fascist and Nazi in pre-WW2 Europe.

[407] According to the 1996 General Social Survey (extracted via http://csa.berkeley.edu:7502/cgi-bin12/hsda2, April 11, 2005), the persons Gans has in mind, that is those individuals between the 30th and 70th percentiles in terms of family income, receive an annual family income between roughly 20,000 and 60,000 US Dollars. Their median years of schooling is 13, and more than three quarters of these persons have not earned a bachelor's degree.

Middle Americans usually maintain few network ties beyond the boundaries of their families and workplaces. At most, they are involved in neighborhood and church groups, but they have little experience in the participation in voluntary associations (Gans [1988] 1991: 43ff),[408] which are the most important formal organizations for full-fledged social movements. It follows that middle Americans are neither well trained in the operation of voluntary associations, nor do they have the possibility to recruit within their class from existing formal organizations, a practice that has strengthened the new social movements considerably (Fernandez & McAdam 1989; Bearman & Everett 1993).

In absence of dense networks, middle America has not developed a class identity. While the weakness of pre-existing networks already means a scarcity of organizationally skilled persons, the inability to draw on the collective identity of already existing class organization as the rudimentary base for New Age's emerging collective identity has obstructed the construction of a solidarity-inducing collective identity even further. Like any movement rooted in middle America, New Age needed to establish surrogates for the class' missing organization and identity. New Age's "solutions" to these problems — private enterprises as organizational carriers and a decidedly universalist identity — favor mass behavior over collective action proper.

Since prospective New Agers lack social capital, they also cannot convert their limited cultural capital they command most effectively.[409] Not only because of their inexperience in the usage of masterframes, New Age protagonists are handicapped in the construction of collective action frames. Some of the identity construction venues open to persons rooted in other environments are blocked to middle Americans. Specifically, many frames produced within New Age lack authenticity and thus legitimacy, not (only) because of the inherent qualities rooted in the relation of these frames to empirical reality, but mainly due to the social circumstances of their production. As the discussion in chapter 7 has shown, many frames utilized by ethnic groups are equally untenable when it comes to empirical adequacy. However, these frames have the "virtue" of being voiced by sources that because of their alleged ascriptive group belongingness are considered to control authentic knowledge about

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[408] It is more than doubtful that the Protestant sects today still have the same qualities that led Max Weber to consider them prototypical voluntary associations.

[409] See Bourdieu ([1979] 1992: 150-161, 184-187) for the theoretical justification of this thesis.

the character of the group. Beside this plus on authenticity, ethnic groups, of course, also key frames that are sponsored by academy and state(s), and thereby acquire additional legitimacy. In contrast, most New Age frames are not keyed from frames embraced by incumbents in either state and academy. Since New Age frames in addition are universalist, the carriers of these frames do and will not be ascriptively attributed to their movement, which weakens claims to authenticity even further. In combination with the actual low empirical credibility of New Age, it is unsurprising that New Age frames were unable to trigger collective action proper.

The problems that arise from the scarcity of social capital and the resulting inefficiencies in the use of cultural capital also offset the advantages that might result from the form of capital that is most accessible to middle Americans, namely economic capital. The more successful social movements could thrive on an institutional background, which supplied them with the most important tangible resources social movement organizations. The new social movements, for instance, rely heavily on institutional opportunities supplied by the academy, while fundamentalist Christians can usually use the infrastructure of established churches. In these cases, churches and academy provide the most important tangible resource for the construction of a collective actor. This central resource consists of meeting spaces (Cress & Snow 1996), which are collective goods.[410] Unfortunately, most economic capital of middle Americans is attached to individuals, though. Due to the free-rider problem, which cannot be overcome by the type of collective identity New Age has produced, the most important material resources can therefore not easily be acquired with the form of economic capital New Agers have at their disposal.

In sum, the configuration of resources in New Age's recruitment pool is adverse to collective action proper, even though the absolute level of resources middle Americans control is probably higher than in some other, more successful movements such as the civil rights movement.

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[410] These are not public goods in the strict sense that individuals cannot be excluded from their usage, but these are goods that their usage is rarely restricted to their owners.

The Organizational Problem: New Age as an Industry

The difficulties in the construction of collective action proper already imply that New Age also has problems in the erection of movement organizations, as these, too, are collective goods which usually require collective action proper (Heckathorn 1989: 80).

Without the possibility to rely on existing informal groups (*submerged networks*), the construction of formal movement organizations becomes the *sine qua non* for emerging collective actors. Since New Age could not rely on any institutional support, a different solution for the organizational problem evolved. That solution is an industry consisting of small business organizations. As committed New Agers lacked resources to erect organizations in their free time, the the foundation of small enterprises became the most attractive option. On the whole, these businesses have a high turnover rate and usually remain confined to the size of a pure family enterprise. Most likely, the volatility of the New Age market is due to lack of entrepreneurial skills of most New Agers. There are a few big enterprises, but there is doubt that those companies are led by committed New Agers. Indeed, as the examination of the probably most coherently organized branch of New Age — the New Age music industry — has shown, professional success most likely leads to a distancing of the successful entrepreneurs from the movement, because the identity of a professional is at odds with the external framing of the movement as sponsoring dilettante practices. Since the professional environment can usually supply more incentives than New Age, a distancing from New Age results.

Consequently, the New Age market consists of a large number of small enterprises led by committed, but entrepreneurially unskilled businesspersons, and a few medium-sized cooperations led by better skilled, but less committed individuals. This organization as a retail industry holds some important consequences for New Age's recruitment practices and ideology.

The Impact of Market Forces on Ideology: New Age as Mass Movement

That most New Age movement entrepreneurs really a r e entrepreneurs in the literal sense shapes goals and recruitment practices of the movement's leadership. True, some New Age entrepreneurs might disregard the profit goal, but these will likely be weeded out through market forces, unless they can rely on capital reserves held prior to the foundation of their business.

It follows that one, if not the central goal of New Age entrepreneurs is the accumulation of customers or, *continual recruitment* in the terminology of movement theory. However, only recruitment of passive rank-and-file members is desirable, since movement leaders, i.e. activists and entrepreneurs, can easily be conceived as competition. Since entrance of new competitors is not in the interest of the established entrepreneurs, the latter will discourage or at least not support the inclusion of new movement leaders.

Because movement entrepreneurs among themselves are in a situation of economic competition, there also is little incentive for cooperation across movement enterprises. There does certainly also exist competition among leaders of other movements, but these competitions take most of the time place within the same organization or across different branches of a single umbrella organization. Such organizational unity, of course, protects against all too open confrontations among movement leaders. Even if leadership competition is inter-organizational, social movement organizations usually are located in the non-profit sector of the economy. Ergo, competition among leaders is also not as directly governed by market forces as it is in the New Age industry. Since New Age does not enjoy these mitigating circumstances, the movement has starkly proliferated.

The retail organization does not only govern recruitment practices and intra-movement conflicts, it has also important implications for the collective identity of the movement. As the mass media have thus far dismissed the movement as ineffectual, a reframing of New Age would be instrumental to increase New Age's opportunities for collective action. Unfortunately, because intra-movement competition is high, no umbrella organization or even group of movement celebrities, which could defend the movement's standpoint vis-à-vis the wider public, has emerged. That is particularly problematic for New Age, as its members are socially distant from mass media professionals, who have a strong influence over the movement-external framing of New Age. Barring the possibility to influence media discourses through informal ties to journalists, spokespersons of social movement organizations would be the most effective agents to reframe New Age in the media (Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 8). The organizational form of New Age thus curbs New Age's impact on media discourses.

The New Age market is also detrimental for internal movement framings. Most New Age businesspersons, who more often than not entered the industry not as business professionals

but as movement adherents, do also have substantive goals. However, the financial uncertainty of their enterprises demands that the goal of customer recruitment and tenure takes precedence of any of those goals. What is more, the necessity to acquire new customers requires a product diversification almost regardless of ideological content. The dynamics in the New Age industry penalize those movement entrepreneurs, who pursue movement goals regardless of their profitability for the individual entrepreneur. It should go without saying that that situation is particularly adverse to the production of collective goods, and thus inhibits collective action proper. Additionally, market dynamics reward universalism, which presently also is adverse to collective action proper.

During the incipient phase of a movement an universalist coding allows for easily permeable boundaries and, thus, facilitates enlargement of the movement's constituency. Over time, however, universalist codings handicap the movement. Universalism is not suited for collective action proper, because the most important masterframes for this type of action contain primordial and quasi primordial elements, which *per definitionem* do not allow for the easy boundary crossings universalism does. The (socially constructed) strife for temporally stable individual identities likewise favors collective identities that appear less ambiguous. Since only if collective identities can easily be integrated into the corresponding individual identities, a blurring of these types of identities occurs. This blurring, however, facilitates the overcoming of the free-rider problem. Decidedly universalist identities such as New Age's, which do not lend themselves to a blending with stable individual identities can therefore at best produce collective behavior.

Taken together, these theses confirm in the end a well-established theorem. That theorem says that a pure market environment is highly conducive only to the production of private goods, not the collective enterprise of the production of powerful collective identity. Consequently, as New Age's identity does not trigger collective action proper, it also does not trigger political or social change.

Political and Social Impact

The fact t h a t New Age is organized as an industry impedes the emergence of collective action proper. As social, cultural and political changes are all collective goods, one would expect a low impact of New Age on these phenomena. This situation that is aggravated by the fact that in civic and political arenas collectivities that engage in collective action proper

enjoy a greater legitimacy. The manner h o w New Age is organized as a market delivers even further obstacles for its efficacy. The high volatility and the low concentration of the industry suggest at once three obstacles for the evolution of an influential New Age movement.

First, the high turnover rates of New Age businesses hint a low expected profit margins, which in turn deters the movement entrepreneurs familiar with business technologies. Instead, if these persons participate in social movements, they are primarily funneled into new social movement careers, because unlike careers in New Age organizations, careers in new social movements serve to develop skills and biographies that can be marketed in the extra-movement job market. Second, the absence of franchising techniques combined with the lack of any (profit or non-profit) umbrella organization inhibits the emergence of a corporate identity, which could be transformed into a viable collective identity. Finally, the profit orientation of New Age organizations has discounted the authenticity goals of New Agers in the mass media. The goal of monetary revenue, crucial for the survival of New Age organizations and the movement entrepreneurs employed through them, has become an omnipresent marker for New Age identity in mass media.

As a result, New Age has not triggered collective action proper and has consequently been unable to influence wider cultural practices. The mass bahvior New Age produced instead failed to leave an imprint on civil society. One reason for this futility is, of course, that mass behavior is simply not as effective as is collective action proper, when it comes to the production of a collective good such as cultural change. But that is not the only reason. What is more important is that frames produced within the movement have not even entered the wider public discourses. As the discussion in chapter 7 has shown, New Age discourses and external framings run almost parallel to each other. The reasons for this situation lie again in the ideological outlook of New Age frames and the social structural composition of New Age. New Age supporters and the most influential agents for the dissemination of ideas into wider public discourses, journalists, usually come from and remain in different sections of society. These sections are connected through very few network ties, and personal access of New Agers to the media is rare. Institutionalized contact between the two groups does not exist, either. It is therefore easy for journalists to remain ignorant about New Age. In addition, the low cultural resonances of New Age frames do not lend themselves for news

stories, whose contents usually base in a limited repertoire of specific masterframes. Consequently, reporting on New Age has been less rooted in empirical observations of the movement, but instead relied more on already existing masterframes, even if at least one of the frames frequently used in reporting on New Age — the cult frame — focuses on a phenomenon that most New Agers would not consider New Age. But internal New Age frames rarely become known beyond the boundaries of the movement. Even if New Age reporting would however become more empirically adequate, it would be doubtful, if New Age would increase its cultural impact, as the prime arena for social and cultural change, civil society, currently only admits collective actors in the Olsonian sense.

Of the five success criteria outlined in chapter 3.1, New Age thus succeeds only with respect to the instrumental goals of member recruitment and resource mobilization. Because it has failed to complement these successes with the establishment of adequate network structures, the movement has not been admitted to civil society and consequently has failed to influence wider cultural practices. New Age's failure to influence either polity or civil society contains some implications for democratic theory, which will be discussed in the following section.

Implication for Democratic Theory

> "If men are to remain civilized or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased." (De Tocqueville [1835] 1948: 110)

In a rebuttal of Robert Putnam's (1995, 1996) thesis on the growing civic apathy of Americans, Francis Fukuyama claims that

> "[i]t is not clear that either the number of groups or group memberships in civil society [has] declined [over the last years …]. Rather than taking pride in being a member of a powerful labor federation or working for a large corporation, or in having served in the military, people [today] identify with a local aerobics class, a N e w A g e s e c t, a codependent support group, or an Internet chat room." (Fukuyama 1999: 60, 71, emphasis mine)

This thesis has shown, that it may very well be that "participation" in New Age might be one of the favorite pastimes of middle Americans. Alas, we cannot infer from the participation in New Age a representation in civil society, since it is neither clear that membership in New Age enriches one's associational life and it is even more debatable that New Age influences

civil society. Instead, New Age's social and political futility suggests that certain class positions and their associated network situations generate movements that will not be admitted to civil society. Hence, the argument that voluntary associations necessarily have representative functions in civil society (Rich 1999: 26) not only ignores effects of the existing hegemony, but also disregards that not all voluntary associations become admitted to civil society. Both Putnam and his critics might be partially right, social capital in the US is not necessarily declining (Schudson 1996; Paxton 1999),[411] but its uneven distribution does generate a civic apathy across large segments of the population. People are not "bowling alone" (Putnam 1995), but "bowling" in a "New Age sect" does not mean participation in civil society. That situation contains serious implications for democratic theory.

Classical citizenship theory teaches that effective citizenship presupposes the implementation of a set of social, political, and civil rights (Marshall [1949] 1964). To devise policies that ensure these rights is a fairly straightforward endeavor. Voting rights and the setup of legislative and executives bodies govern political rights, rights of freedom of expression and association determine civil rights. The most controversial issue to date has been the concrete arrangement of social rights. The question, to what extent and in which ways the state must provide economic and cultural resources to individuals in order to ensure that these individuals can effectively exercise their political and civil rights is still far from being settled. Yet, debates on social rights are precisely that controversial, because a multitude of concrete policy options, ranging from school vouchers to social security payments, exist. Consequently, even if the actual solutions for the provision of political, civil, and social rights vary considerably, most self-declared liberal democracies do furnish their citizens with rights in all three relevant areas.

Despite the existence of these rights, though, not all citizens actually participate in the political process. Even if one acknowledges that participation of the entire citizenry in the political deliberation processes would only produce noise, it has become clear that the selection of the participants in policy debates is far from being random. Over the past decades, that situation has been addressed by an introduction of "minority rights," which are

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[411] To be sure, Paxton's (1999) account of the development of social capital in the US suffers from the serious shortcoming that, using items from the GSS, her operationalization of social capital is measured on the individual level, while social capital is a relational concept.

designed to increase the political rights and therefore participation chances of certain disadvantaged groups. In the beginning, particularly so-called ethnic and linguistic groups benefited from this legislation, but increasingly groups based on gender or sexual orientation are also included in minority legislation. What all these groups have in common is — beside a tendency to be defined through primordially or quasi-primordially coded identities — their success in launching full-fledged social movements engaging in collective action proper. In other words, no matter how disadvantaged these groups were and are, they were at least able to enter the discourse in civil society. New Age as an agent of middle America was unsuccessful on this count, although its constituency commands certainly over more economic and cultural resources than at least some of the more successful groups, e.g., Native Americans. Consequently, an extension of social rights to New Agers would not cure the most important cause of New Age's and middle America's political and civic apathy, namely the paucity of its pre-existing network. In a sense, the findings presented here support a more recent strand of citizenship theory, which views citizenship rights not as individual status rights, but instead argues for a conceptualization as relational rights (Somers 1993; Somers 1994; Somers 1995). The key argument for such a conceptualization is that "social order *is* neither a naturalistic system nor a plurality of individuals, but rather an indeterminate configuration of cultural and institutional relationships" (Somers 1994: 71). For all its weaknesses,[412] this analysis does make the important observation that the actualization of citizenship rights always depends on existing network relations. "The social structure, however, suffers from a massive case of inertia" (Róna-Tas 1998: 120) and no easy remedies for differentials in network structure are in sight. While one can legislate changes in the distribution of economic and — to some extent and with considerable time lags — cultural capital, changes in the makeup of network structures require much less tangible policies than a simple redistribution of resources.[413]

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[412] The most glaring weakness in Somers' (1993) argument against Marshall's citizenship theory is that it at once makes a normative argument for a new definition of citizenship rights and then goes on to apply this new definition in the dismissal of Marshall's theory on the genesis of citizenship rights. It is little wonder that under such circumstances Marshall's theory fares poorly; as plain logic would suggest that an exchange of the *explanandum* in most cases should also lead to a shift in the *explanans*.

[413] Róna-Tas (1998: 127ff) elaborates this argument with respect to economic transformations.

As this research in conjunction with the numerous studies on more successful social movements shows, the importance of network configurations does not only apply to access to the formal polity, but is equally relevant for the admission to civil society. Even if the exact admission fees differ, civil society does know admission tickets just like the polity. Worse, the same currencies are required for the purchase of tickets to either arena. That is hardly surprising, as the polity influences civil society in more than one way. On the ideational plane, the modern nation state with primordially coded communities and rationally acting free individuals as two sides of the hegemonic ideology of nationalism[414] are the blueprint for the most successful new identities. On the organizational level, the state is the most important agency for the provision of the institutional structures that govern civil society. In addition, the same variables, i.e., economic, cultural and social (network) resources that facilitate entrance into the polity, also help to establish social movements which engage in collective action proper. That complicates matters for those theorists that champion civil society as a terrain where movements find inroads for challenges to "restrictions and inequalities in the communicative processes in public and private [spheres]" (Cohen & Arato [1992] 1994: 549).

It follows that a convincing solution to problem of unequal chances for participation in civil society and the political process would not only require an effective set of social, political, and civil rights, but also needs to take existing network configurations into account. How well can this demand be integrated into contemporary conceptualizations of citizenship rights?

Currently, one can distinguish two dominant approaches to the structure of citizenship rights. On one side we find the traditional liberal approach, which considers individuals the sole bearers of citizenship rights. This approach has recently been challenged by advocates of "differentiated citizenship," (Young 1990: 115; Young 1995b: 176) who favor the introduction of rights that protect groups independently of their individual members.

Classical liberalism seeks to alleviate differences in opportunities through status rights for individuals, most notably social rights. While these rights do contribute towards equal access

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[414] Today, there are no more nationalisms that are exclusively in civic or, much less, ethnic terms, and there is some doubts, there ever were (Brubaker 1999). Therefore, both civic individualism and ethnic primordialism components can be found it all national identities.

to political institutions, they cannot tear down all barriers to entry into the political process or even civil society. Not the least because network positioning is one key element for both the effective exercise of social citizenship rights (Wilson 1994: 55) and — as this study shows — for admission to civil society, status rights alone do not guarantee equal opportunities in either civic or political sphere.

Liberal theory at its best can invent some procedures that could counterbalance the handicaps that result from disadvantageous network suggestions, but until now it has failed to develop a framework that could level network opportunities themselves. Take Gans' ([1988] 1991: 124-133) five suggestions to combat organizational avoidance and political apathy of middle America. The suggested solutions — increased outreach of parliamentarians' paid staff towards the constituency, mandatory and publicly funded lobby organizations for underrepresented groups, "pluralistic polling," endowment of additional news media, and facilitation of class action suits — not only are primarily suited to equalize access to polity and are less helpful to gain admittance to civil society. They are also merely directed against the symptoms of organizational avoidance, but do not affect the root of the problem. This is hardly surprising, as changing the network structure of society is not a goal that can be achieved with the existing means available to policy makers. At best, one could create more opportunities for the construction of new network ties, for example through the encouragement of more college careers, but a direct intervention into the social fabric is extremely difficult. In fact, even if one were to devise a legislation that would lead to a mandatory creation of network ties, e.g. in the form of obligatory participation in neighborhood associations, such legislation would probably not produce the desired results. Most likely, the element of coercion would lead to resentment for such participation. In addition, coercion would also run against the spirit of liberal democracy with its emphasis for rights to the individual.

In view of these shortcomings of the traditional liberal model of citizenship, some critics have moved away from the position that individuals should be the sole targets of citizenship rights. On the heels of the rise of identity politics, these critics argue that in contemporary societies sub-national groups are the primary loci for political participation (Denham & Slawner 1998: 1). The hierarchical standing of these groups would critically determine the

substantial participation chances. Therefore, these groups should also become entitled to legal provisions.

On first sight, these group rights, which at least affect network chunks, constitute some progress towards more equality. However, closer inspection reveals at least two serious shortcomings of group rights. First, the selection of those groups considered worthy of protection is extremely difficult and even likely perpetuates some existing inequalities. Even if one were to come up with rules that would identify all disadvantaged groups, though, inequalities resulting from internal structures of those groups would hamper the efficiency of group rights. In addition, group rights do not resonate well on ideological elements that characterize participatory democracy. Let me elaborate on each of these shortcomings.

Obviously, not all groups can qualify as targets for minority rights. Therefore, some criteria that decide, which groups should qualify for minority status, must be developed. Unfortunately, many theorists of post-liberal citizenship are either equivocal on this question or even avoid it altogether (Meyer 1998: 67).[415] Yet, they do have certain groups in mind, namely those groups that have successfully engaged in identity politics: the new social movements, ethnic groups, and indigenous peoples. Even if these groups cannot be defined in an analytical fashion, they do share some commonalties. Let us take a closer look at the groups that theorists of differentiated citizenship have in mind. Starting from the premise that "[a] social group involves first of all an affinity with other persons by which they identify with one another and by which other people identify them" (Young 1990: 122), read: share a collective identity, post-liberal citizenship theorists single out those groups, whose collective identity triggers collective action proper.

> "It is important to underline that such social and cultural groups are not merely associations or aggregations of individuals. The narratives around which they are formed go around the more self-interested types of collective behavior." (Gianni 1998: 38)

Hence, New Age, which almost exclusively resorts to collective behavior, would certainly not qualify for minority status. Indeed, if the theoretical apparatus proposed here is appropriate, all groups with poor networks and low on cultural and economic resources will have a hard time to achieve minority status, because they have little potential to forge

collective identities that would trigger collective action proper. Even if one were to argue that New Agers on the average are far less disadvantaged in terms of economic and cultural resources than, say, Native Americans are, the mere fact that the viability of group rights is currently restricted to groups with certain types of identities casts doubts on the justifiability of these rights.[416] These doubts are fortified by the fact that most likely an ideological affinity between those frames that dominate the polity — nationalism — and civil society — namely other primordialized or quasi-primordialized frames — exists. Indeed, Iris Marion Young makes this call for quasi-primordialization even explicit. For her, groups eligible for minority rights, share an affinity, which "has the character of what Heidegger calls 'thrownness:' one finds oneself as a member of a group whose existence and relations one experiences as always already having been" (Young 1990: 122).[417]

If the ideology predominant in the formal polity is so influential for the ideology that governs entrance into civil society, and if the resource requirements for admittance to either realm are so strikingly similar, then it is difficult to see, how the recourse to civil society can effectively level those inequalities that have been sustained through a misconfiguration of the state.

Even, if one were to come up with a procedure to select groups eligible for minority rights that would not be (solely) based on the performance of these groups in civil society, group rights still would not effectively mediate the influence of network positioning. It has been well documented that the presently existing group rights benefit primarily those members, who are the least disadvantaged within the minority targeted by group rights laws (Wilson 1994). In other words, the sanctioning of groups would most likely lead to a situation, where simply different individuals or groups would suffer from discrimination. If individuals would be sanctioned according to their group membership at least some, if imperfect, equalization would occur, as in this case group membership would serve as an easily identifiable proxy for poor network positioning. Such measures would work towards equality, as long as group

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[415] Young (1990: 122), for instance, freely declares that she "shall not define social groups," although these are the collectivities, for which she eloquently demands group rights.

[416] In the US, the so-called "White Trash" comes immediately to mind as an example for a group, whose members hold similar disadvantages as members of other groups that have been more successful in the establishment of group rights.

[417] Interestingly, most post-liberals do favor this quasi-primordialism, but from their accounts the less pleasant (Aryan Nation) and less active (Amish) groups of this type are conspicuously absent (Slawner 1998: 88).

members on average are in disadvantageous network positions. The logic of group rights is though a different one. As they primarily protect group existence, it is neither certain that network positioning of the group members vis-à-vis larger society will improve, nor are there any provisions that would curb internal group inequalities.

Finally, let me note that the decidedly collectivist and particularistic approach of group rights does not resonate well with the idea of participatory democracy. Its collectivism stands against the spirit of active participation, which in essence is an activity of individuals. Its particularism can only with great difficulty be reconciled with the inclusive universalism citizenship aims at.[418] From this standpoint, "it seems clear that civic society in Europe must be built primarily on the rights of individual citizens and not on collective rights for groups." (Altermatt 1999: 82). Naturally, ideological affinities alone should not decide about the suitability of rights for the equalization of chances. In concert with the dubiousness of the selection methods for minority right eligibility and the ineffectiveness to truly level individual chances, group rights do not seem to be appropriate measures to account for the importance of network position.

The political a n d c i v i c apathy of New Agers and their peers, shows that, just like in the economy and polity, a sole reliance on the invisible hand in civil society does also not necessarily produce the desired results. Even if middle America is certainly not the least advantaged segment of the population, it certainly is also not the least disadvantaged, when compared to the new middle classes, or business elites. In fact, New Age epitomizes one trait that characterizes oppression as defined by multiculturalists. Namely, New Agers are "stereotyped at the same time that their experience and situation are invisible in wider society, and they have little opportunity and little audience for the expression of their perspective on social events" (Young 1990: 123). As was shown in chapter 6, New Age's internal discourses cannot be found in media discourses. Instead the media and therefore wider public discourse employ culturally resonant and empirically inadequate frames to

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[418] Some multiculturalists argue that "the state cannot but promote particular culture(s)" (Tamir 1995: 4). Therefore multicultural states are allegedly necessarily particularistic towards its citizenry. As the concept of culture in this case is considered synonymous with ethnicity, one can dismiss this criticism as positivist ethno-nationalist. A more sophisticated argument demonstrates that Hobbes', Locke's, Rousseau's and Madison's original ideas of the universal individual were indeed taunted by a patriarchal and/or nationalist particularisms. Thus, the language of universality can all too easily conceal or legitimize the power of dominant groups (Phillips 1993: 36ff; Young 1990: 114ff).

describe the movement's identity. True, New Age identity certainly does not have the 'thrownness' Young demands for minority identities, but, as has been argued above, why should group protection hinge on a criterion that essentially demands the keying of the state-sponsored nation frame?

If group rights do not adequately address the problems created by poor network connectivity, what kind of rights would? At least one well-known provision can alleviate, albeit not solve the problem. That provision is the extension of social rights. The amount of economic and to a lesser extent cultural resources is fairly easily measurable at the level of the individual. Network connectivity, read: social capital, is not perfectly related to the other two forms of capital, but, as the discussion in chapter 8 has shown, it is neither entirely unrelated to network positioning, which is far more difficult to assess. Of course, the extension of social rights would be particularly difficult in the US, where class has been traditionally a neglected category. That makes the extension of social rights, though, even more interesting, as it would sanction a group identity that has been marginalized not on the polity and economy, but also in civil society.

Of course, a fortification of social rights would not solve the problem of unequal access to citizenship completely. There is one observation that mitigates against this imperfection, though. This observation concerns the actual benefits that would incur from the participation of all sociological classes that hitherto have abstained from participation in the political process. How would a vibrant participation of middle America actually influence polity and civil society. If New Age ideology could be considered as typical for the ideology of middle American movements, then one might argue that such movement have little to offer to society.

Many recent students of social movements attribute a positive transformation potential to social movements. Indeed, only a few reactionaries contest that civil rights, women's and queer movements have contributed significantly to the overall welfare of society by opening both political and cultural spaces for hitherto marginalized individuals. Undoubtedly also, ecology and peace movements have contained to some extent the external effects produced by polluting industries and the military apparatus.

Nowhere has the alleged functionality of social movements for the reproduction of society more clearly hypothesized than in systems theory. Systems theorists model social movements

as "peculiar autopoetic systems, which based on high conflictual potential can assume the role of the immunity system of society." (Luhmann [1984] 1988: 548, translation mine).

> "Insofar the new social movements can be metaphorically considered as 'sniffing dogs.' Their sole purpose is detect 'with their superior noses' those problem potentials which could endanger modern society 'with its degenerated smelling sense.'" (Hellmann 1996: 72, translation mine)

Even if most social movement theorists would not capture the benignity of social movements in such stark functionalist terms, the majority of commentators does evaluate social movement activity valuable.

Of course, these assessments refer usually to social movements that engage in collective action proper, but it is difficult to see, why they should not also apply to social movements which because of their social composition primarily resort to collective behavior.

Naturally, it is hazardous to assess the benignity of functionality of a social movement, as this constitutes ultimately a normative question. Let me nevertheless measure New Age's societal utility on two standards. One of these standards is academic scrutiny, the other societal response. New Age's fails on both counts.

Most problems New Age raises are individual grievances. Some of the most common problems New Agers raise concern health, individual wealth, fear of UFO abduction, and lack of a life time partner. Although these problems could have (and most likely do have) social structural causes, the problems are almost always framed as individual problems. One therefore cannot strictly speak of an identification of social problems. In fact, it might even be that New Age conceals social problems by framing them as individual predicaments.

Regardless of the nature of the problems voiced by New Age, the solution strategies New Age offers are almost always either unfalsifiable, or have already been refuted. Take *creative visualization*, the popular "technique" to achieve individual goals qua the imagination of these goals. Take the "critical mass" thesis that a sufficient number of persons pondering the same thought will transfer this thought to additional humans without any communication among these individuals. Take the popular stories on afterlife experiences, encounters with angels or communications with ghost. Take tarot, astrology, numerology, witchcraft. None of these techniques has supported in scientific testing.

If we do not want to apply the standards of the academy, certainly a privileged institution, we might find the conception that an issue should be considered a relevant social problem, if

most members of society deliberate on a common conceptual terrain (Schetsche 1998). New Age, of course, fits this scenario perfectly[419] and, hence, also fails this litmus test. It should be noted, however, that Schetsche completely ignores the problems of hegemony. According to his criterion, small minorities that contest a hegemonic idea would identify an 'unreal' social problem. The application of Schetse's conceptual apparatus would thus likely cement the most enduring power relationships.

I would be hesitant to decide which collective actors do point towards significant societal problems. But for those, who do normatively affirm the contribution of contemporary social movements towards the welfare of society — among them many post-liberal theorists of democratic theory — it might be comforting to hear that at least according to above proposed criteria New Age would not contribute to a further development of society. Its political and cultural futility could therefore be interpreted as being, so to speak, "deserved."

Implications for Movement Theory

Which implications for the development of social movement theory can we draw from the findings of this study? Most importantly. it has been shown that two currently unpopular theoretical traditions, the mass society paradigm and resource mobilization theory proper, are probably under-appreciated. The possible contributions of these theories will be discussed in the following two sections. This under-appreciation, of course, begs the question, why these theories have become so unpopular. The answer that will be suggested in the final section of this chapter, which emphasizes the entanglement of movement research and activism in movements.

A Renaissance for Mass Society Theory?

Many critics allege that mass society theory implies the devaluation of social movements. To some extent these criticisms are well taken, as many silent anti-movement assumptions were carried over from the influential works of Le Bon or Ortega y Gasset. Nevertheless, one can salvage a number of valuable hypotheses from mass society paradigm. Even better, many of its weaknesses can easily be reformulated to fit contemporary assumptions on social movements.

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[419] That New Age fits so well into Schetsche's scheme is hardly surprising, as Schetsche develops his argument on UFO abduction stories, which also exist in New Age discourses.

That is certainly true for the most frequently cited objection to the entire collective behavior tradition, namely that the continuum from crowds to social movements posited in collective behavior theories, characterizes participation in social movements as irrational (e.g., Cohen & Arato [1992] 1994: 496). However, quite to the contrary, the most basic forms of collective behavior, crowds and panics, can straightforwardly and successfully be modeled as n-person prisoner's dilemma, and therefore are most easily reconcilable with the assumption of rationality (Brown 1965: 736ff).

If the rationality assumption can easily be imported into mass society theory, one no longer needs to hold up the strict distinction between "bad" collective behavior and "good" collective action for normative reasons. That opens up the possibility to examine, under which circumstances movements resort to mass behavior and when they trigger collective action proper.

Mass society theory rightly emphasizes the importance of network structure, even though it oddly underestimates the mobilization potential of well organized intermediary groups for collective action proper (Oberschall 1973: 106). Part of this underestimation is certainly due to the characterization of Nazi movements as mass behavior rather than collective action proper. In a sense, New Age fits the theoretical assumptions better than the movements the theory was originally designed for. While the NSDAP during the Weimar republic resorted to a mixture of mass behavior, collective behavior, and collective action proper, New Age has a strong bias for mass behavior.

Mass society theory also offers theses on the social origins of movements, which allows us to see surprising similarities between apparently ideologically disparate social movements such as New Age and the Nazi movement. In fact, middle America in important aspects is reminiscent of what in mass society theory, ironically, was called the "new middle classes," (Lederer [1940] 1967: 51) the prime carriers of the Nazi movement. These classes consist of white and pink collar workers (plus nowadays increasingly small entrepreneurs), who despite their ubiquity lack "the psychological support of large numbers, as they [are] scattered in small in small groups throughout the economic system" (*ibid.*, p. 52),[420] in other words, lack network embeddedness like middle American New Agers do.

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[420] The same political futility applies to middle Americans. "[W]hile they are numerous, they lack the resources to exert the power of their numbers" (Gans [1988] 1991: xi).

Indeed, explanations for emergence of fascist and Nazi movements in mass society theory would take us a long way in the analysis of New Age's success, even though New Age does neither bear much ideological resemblance to these movements, nor were most original statements of mass society theory intended for an explanation of movements with such minuscule political impact as New Age.[421] But there are apparent parallels. Consider Hannah Arendt's assessment of the masses for the rise of what she called "totalitarian movements."

> "Masses are not held together by a consciousness of common interest. […] It was characteristic of the rise of the Nazi movement in Germany […] that [it] recruited [its] members from this mass of apparently indifferent people whom all other parties had given up as too apathetic or too stupid for their attention." (Arendt 1951: 305)

The social characteristics Arendt mentions might not apply to all Nazis, but they do describe the typical New Ager fairly well. New Age's recruitment pool does not know a collective class identity or desire to produce collective good. Much of New Age's actual and prospective membership is also detached from political processes. And the image of stupidity is also omnipresent in framings of New Age, as the analysis of media framings has shown.

Even, if we know today that the social basis of Nazism were much broader than mass society theory imagined (Brustein & Falter 1995), few historians would deny the success of the NSDAP among the classes mass society theory purports as primary carriers of totalitarian movements. Such classes in similar structural positions still exist today. When Kornhauser speaks of a lack of intermediary groups that facilitated recruitment to Nazism, we can translate this condition into the language of contemporary social theory as an underdevelopment of civil society. As the previous discussion has shown, civil society today is probably much less developed than many social philosophers presume. To push the

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[421] An interesting exception is Adorno's article on the *Los Angeles Times* astrology column, which does reveal parallels between totalitarian ideology and the traditional occult, which is ideologically related to New Age and is as politically ineffective as is New Age. One common element is the belief in one's own incapacity.

> "The [astrology] column attempts to satisfy the longings of people who are thoroughly convinced that others (or some unknown agency) ought to know more about themselves and what they should do than they can decide for themselves." (Adorno 1974: 17)

Another parallel is the centeredness on the family network, which is familiar from the abundance of relationship-related literature in New Age:

> "[T]he prevailing idea is that the family is still the only "team" knitted together by so strong common interests that one can rely on each other with little reservations and somehow make joint plans in order to cope successfully with a threatening and potentially hostile world." (*ibid*., p. 70)

These parallels suggest, that even if fascist and New Age ideologies are very different in effect, they cater to similar audiences.

argument, one might suggest that yesterday's masses are today's middle Americans and their West European equivalents. Again using mass society theory, one could further maintain that today these persons are recruited by the ineffective New Age rather than a powerful totalitarian movement, because the cultural elites, whose availability is required for the construction of such movements (Kornhauser [1959] 1960: 51ff), presently face far more opportunities in the new social movements and established institutions. Since most new middle class members are thus absorbed by other collective actors, New Age and other low middle class movements must rely on persons from their own class for movement leadership. Since these movement entrepreneurs hold less effective types of cultural resources and receive almost no institutional support, much less powerful movements ensue.

It is not intended to argue here for an unmediated return mass society paradigm. To repeat, much of the criticism against the paradigm is well taken. Above thought experiments shall simply demonstrate that the wholesale rejection of mass society theory that is currently fashionable, has probably been premature. That applies emphatically to the concepts of mass and mass behavior, which have been and according to some (König 1997) should forever remain in the dustbin labeled "history of sociology." Even if the currently derogatory sounding mass label could eventually be dropped, the substantive contents of the mass concept is valuable. It is about time to acknowledge that not all social movement participants are well organized rational actors and individuals trying to affirm their cultural identities but also aggregates of persons pursuing similar individual activities. Only if movement theory were to re-admit collective behavior into its object realm, why some movements engage neither in interest group nor symbolic politics, but rather in no politics at all.

Mass society theory is not the only movement paradigm, whose utility is currently underestimated. The findings on New Age can also partially rehabilitate the resource mobilization paradigm in its initial formulations.

A Renaissance for Resource Mobilization Theory?

Just like mass society theory, the "original"[422] formulation of resource mobilization theory (McCarthy & Zald [1977] 1987) is today mostly quoted for historical reasons. Even though it

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[422] It is difficult to determine the precise temporal boundaries of resource mobilization theory. Certainly McCarthy and Zald's 1977 article is not the first article that emphasizes the key defining concepts of the paradigm, i.e. rationality and organization. Indeed, more comprehensive resource mobilization accounts had

usually receives slightly better reviews, particularly for its injection of the rational actor into movement theory, most theorists which have not opted for more "cultural" explanations today favor a political process model à la McAdam or Tarrow. There are also again compelling reasons to favor the political process model. The latter is more dynamic than resource mobilization theory proper; it does not tend to conflate social movement organizations and social movements, and, most importantly, it does not obfuscate the important role of the state.

However, the shortcomings of resource mobilization theory proper are exaggerated. Both the relatively static conception of movement development and the muddling of differences between social movement organizations and social movements are not inherent features of the theory, but have developed as such in actual research practice, as even sharp critics of the approach readily admit. Therefore, they can easily be fixed.

The strong emphasis political process model theorists place on the role of the state, appears in a different light, if one moves to more culturally oriented movements, which are inept or unwilling to turn to political framings of their goals. Although the German state has attempted to actively shape audience framings of New Age, while the US-polity has been generally acquiescent to the phenomenon, media framings of New Age in both states are surprisingly similar.

Again, this is not to deny the importance of political institutions for movement development. It seems, though, that state actions effect a movement, whose goals do not include access to the polity, only marginally. Vice versa, the emphasis of resource mobilization theory proper on market dynamics is, of course, not lost on a movement, whose organizational backbone has been organized according to market dynamics. The relative success of the political process model is, hence, partly due to a selection of movements which do have political goals, or at least have reframed their goals on the cultural level onto the political level.

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been published years earlier (Gamson 1975b; Oberschall 1973). Yet, until today this article has probably been considered the epitome of the resource mobilization approach.

The Impact of Social Movements onto Social Movement Research

Both nearly unanimous rejection of mass society theory and the focus on the polity by political process theorist are in my view at least partly due to the entanglement of social movement activism and social movement research. That is, because many researchers have extra-scientific interested in the objects of their study, it appears at times difficult to detect politically or moral properties that might have implications for the actual social processes. Eric Hobsbawm (1990) once asserted that good students of nationalism can never be nationalists themselves, because the core of belief nationalists, the ontological existence of nations, dissolves, once one acknowledges the actual properties of the phenomenon. In the case of most other social movements, we do not need to go that far, as in most cases their ideologies do not rest on empirically untenable concepts. Yet, more ideological separation of movement activism and movement research would probably be beneficial for both sides.[423]

In times, when "rationality" is considered an asset for the efficacy and legitimacy of a movement, it is, of course, hard to admit that one's own movement contains elements of irrationality. Likewise, once one has embraced the view that movement goals can be furthered through the political process, a bias to consider only those movements that are either genuine political movements or movements that attempt to "turn the personal into the political" as real movements. Movements that like New Age are less successful in becoming political, are easily omitted that way, which in turn conceals that the politicization of a movement itself is an accomplishment.

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[423] Movements would be relieved from the conservatism that is indigenous to all institutions including academic ones.

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APPENDIX: QUESTIONAIRE FOR NEW AGE STORES